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PART XIII.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF PERSIA.

January to March 1908.

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157	India Office	3,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits telegram from Bagdad, dated 25th January, re- porting extensive Turkish military prepara- tions	90
158	Sir A. Nicolson ..	22 Tel.	5,	Russian and British Consul's visit to Soujboulak suggested by M. Zinoview. M. Is- volsky will adopt suggestion if we agree ..	91
159	Mr. Marling ..	37 Tel.	5,	Turkish military preparations on frontier. Arrival at Khanikin of ammunition, guns, and troops reported	91
159*	To Consul-General Cumberbatch	Telegraphic	5,	Rumoured disembarkation of Turkish arms and ammunition at Beyrout. Inquires facts	91*
160	To India Office ..	..	5,	Transfer of Ahwaz-Borasjun telegraph line. Refers to No. 111. Concurs in Mr. Kirk's suggestion. Inquires as to cost, as Treasury sanction will be needed ..	91
161	Sir F. Bertie ..	8 Tel.	5,	M. Bizot. His instructions are being pre- pared, and he will start on 20th at latest ..	92
162	Consul-General Cum- berbatch	Telegraphic	6,	Turkish transport at Beyrout. Refers to No. 159*. Arrival on 21st December reported to Embassy on 23rd. Details as to numbers and destination	92
163	Sir N. O'Connor ..	33 Tel. Confidential	7,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 158. Russian colleague only suggested that Consuls should delegate some one to visit Soujboulak—a dangerous course—but he is not likely to recur to question if we drop it	92
164	Mr. Marling ..	38 Tel.	7,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 159. Arrival of cavalry at Khanikin. The Vali of Pushtikuh's movements	92
165	" ..	39 Tel.	7,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 158. Agrees with Russian colleague in thinking Consuls should not leave Urumia ..	92
166	To Mr. Marling ..	31 Tel.	7,	Soujboulak. Refers to No. 158. To instruct Mr. Wratislaw to visit. Russian colleague similarly instructed	93
167	To Sir N. O'Connor .. " Sir A. Nicolson ..	53 32	7,	Turkish military preparations on Persian frontier. Has informed Count Bencken- dorff and hinted at possible developments of situation	93
168	Sir N. O'Connor ..	36 Tel. Confidential	8,	Turco-Persian Frontier Commission. Trans- mits telegram from Urumia. Adjourn- ment to Soujboulak discussed. Inquires if British and Russian Governments insist on their Consular officers attending with decisive voice	93

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170	" ..	41 Tel.	8,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Refers to No. 117. Will take action with Russian colleague as soon as practicable. Inquires which Department is to accept Russian obligations	94
171	" ..	42 Tel.	8,	Tehran-Khanikin telegraph. Refers to Nos. 7 and 303, Part XI. M. de Hartwig knows of no definite Agreement as to cession of rights. Asks what is contemplated ..	94
172	To Mr. Marling ..	33 Tel.	8,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 165. Action need not be taken on No. 166 if not desirable.	95
173	Sir A. Nicolson ..	25 Tel.	9,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Refers to No. 116, and Part XI, Nos. 303 and 306. Gives M. Isvolsky's views. Suggests course of further action	95
174	Sir N. O'Connor ..	57	5,	Affairs in Mush Plain and Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits despatch (No. 23) from Van, describing recent journey ..	95
175	" ..	39 Tel.	10,	Turco-Persian frontier. (a) Attendance of Russian and British Consuls at Commission. Transmits telegram (No. 14) from Urumia. (b) Interview with Minister for Foreign Affairs respecting reasons for occupation of Soujboulak; (c) Recall of Turkish Am- bassador and First Secretary from Tehran	103
176	Mr. Marling ..	43 Tel.	10,	Shiraz escort. Urges more permanent measures to cope with state of insecurity ..	104
177	To Board of Trade ..	Confidential	10,	German trade and shipping in Persian Gulf. Transmits No. 417, Part XII, and No. 77. Asks that lighterage question may be brought to notice of steam-ship companies concerned	104
178	India Office ..	..	10,	Increase of Ahwaz guard. Transmits tele- gram from Major Cox to Tehran, com- municated to Government of India, discussing needs in case of attack ..	105
179	Sir N. O'Connor ..	40 Tel.	11,	Evacuation of Soujboulak under threat of attack. Transmits telegram from Urumia giving substance of letter received by American missionary reporting ..	105
180	To Sir N. O'Connor ..	28 Tel.	11,	Turco-Persian Frontier Commission. Refers to Nos. 168 and 175. Approves Mr. Wratislaw attending, if Porte suggests it	105
181	India Office ..	..	11,	Advance to Persia. Refers to No. 347, Part XII. Agrees as to statement in Parliament. Transmits Memorandum out- lining procedure as to adjustment of liabilities between Imperial and Indian Exchequers	106
182	"	11,	Interest due on Persian loan. Refers to No. 131. Amount assumed is correct; interest for one year at 5 per cent. will be charged if it is not paid by 4th April. Concurs as to sinking fund	106
183	Memorandum	12,		107

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185	To Sir A. Nicolson ..	31	12,	Refuge for Shah in foreign Legation. Refers to No. 154. Question of guard had better be left to Representatives at Tehran. To ask for instructions to be sent to M. de Hartwig	175
186	" " ..	33	12,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits No. 156. To ascertain Russian views on this communication; also to impress increasing gravity of situation and ask if Russians have any suggestions for joint action ..	175
187	To India Office ..	..	12,	Capture of Dayir pirates. Transmits No. 188. Proposes to express appreciation of action of Khan of Bander Rig and Major Cox. Presumes Captain Hickley's suggestion as to closing Muscat to Afghans will be acted on	176
188	To Admiralty ..	..	12,	Capture of Dayir pirates. Refers to No. 94. Expresses appreciation of Captain Hickley's services	176
189	Sir N. O'Connor ..	41 Tel.	13,	Turco-Persian Frontier Commission. Refers to No. 168. Transmits telegram from Urumia reporting Turkish and Persian claims, which seem likely to lead to deadlock	176
190	Mr. Marling ..	44 Tel.	13,	Exchange of telegraph. Question of accommodation at Birjand. M. de Hartwig's explanation. Asks what reply to give to Consul at Seistan	177
191	To Mr. J. Preece ..	..	13,	Situation in Arabistan. Gives substance of No. 169	177
192	To India Office ..	..	13,	Telegraph lines. Transmits Nos. 170, 171, and 173, and proposes action on points raised	178
193	Major Cox..	Telegraphic	14,	British interests in Persian Gulf. Urges new British Minister should arrive by way of Bushire	179
194	To India Office ..	..	14,	Shiraz escort. Transmits No. 176 and asks observations.. ..	179
195	Mr. Marling ..	45 Tel.	15,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 257. Rumour of Turkish military preparations against Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh without serious foundation	179
196	To Sir N. O'Connor ..	31 Tel.	15,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 189. Inquires exactly what Turks claim ..	179
197	To India Office ..	..	15,	Mesched-Seistan telegraph line. Proposed Russian improvements. Transmits No. 190. Proposes to await explanation from Russian Government, and asks views ..	179
198	Mr. Marling ..	7	Jan. 21,	Military Attaché at Mesched. Refers to No. 114, Part XII. Asks if any decision has been reached. He and Consul-General are anxious post should not be abolished ..	180
199	" " ..	9	21,	Recent events in Soujboulak. Transmits letter to Acting Consul-General Stevens, and abstract of note from Minister for Foreign Affairs respecting. Comments on dangerous position of Firman Firma ..	180

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201	" " ..	11	25,	German flag on native boats in Persian Gulf. Transmits despatch from Bushire reporting circumstances	185
202	" " ..	12	27,	Messrs. Lynch and Bakhtiari Khans. Transmits revised copy of construction accounts. Explains circumstances leading to revision ..	186
203	" " ..	13	29,	Financial position. Reports interviews with German colleague and Mushir-ed-Dowleh..	190
204	" " ..	14	29,	Situation in Persia during January. Reports on generally. Conversation with Premier. Audience of Shah. Discussions in Ministry and Assembly	191
205	" " ..	17	28,	Turco-Persian frontier dispute and position of Sheikh of Mohammerah. Transmits telegraphic correspondence with Bushire respecting	193
206	" " ..	18	30,	Summary of events in Persia and proceedings in the Assembly for January. Transmits. Grave situation in Tabreez and Yezd. Suspicion of President of Assembly ..	194
207	" " ..	19	30,	Action of Turkish troops near Soujboulak. Refers to Nos. 108, 113, and 199. Transmits further notes from Persian Government, including petition of inhabitants to Assembly	200
208	" " ..	20	30,	Overdue interest on Anglo-Indian loan of 1903-4. Reports result of constant representations to Persian Government ..	201
209	" " ..	21 Confidential	30,	Antecedents and character of Persian Minister-designate in London. Offers observations on	202
210	Acting Consul-General Stevens	1	Feb. 3,	Military activity on Russo-Turkish and Russo-Persian frontiers. Reports on, and as to effects of	203
211	Sir A. Nicolson ..	68	5,	Soujboulak. Proposed visit of British and Russian Consuls, and joint formal protest to Porte. Reports conversation with M. Isvolsky	204
212	" " ..	73	9,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Refers to No. 116. Transmits letter from M. Isvolsky agreeing to proposal to approach Persian Government. Discusses Persian attitude. Asks for information for reply ..	204
213	" " ..	79	12,	Attendance of Consuls at Turco-Persian Frontier Commission, and visit to Soujboulak. Activity of Baron von Richt-hofen. Reports conversation with M. Isvolsky	205
214	Mr. Marling ..	46 Tel.	17,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 195. One tapar of 400 men arrived at Khanikin on 13th February	206
215	To Mr. Marling ..	35 Tel.	17,	Interest on loan. Refers to No. 131. Instructs as to action if payment is not made by 4th April. Approves proposed communication respecting sinking fund ..	206

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216	To Mr. Marling ..	14	Feb. 17, 1908	Persian subsidy to German school at Tehran. To ascertain what truth there is in German press rumours of	206
217	Mr. J. Preece ..	..	15,	Oil Syndicate and Bakhtiari Khans. Refers to No. 191. Expresses gratitude to Mr. Marling. Agrees to payment of guards by Mr. Reynolds if Captain Lorimer can obtain Khans' permission	206
218	Sir F. Bertie ..	68	17,	Instructions to M. Bizot. Transmits Memorandum from French Government inclosing	207
219	Mr. Marling ..	47 Tel.	18,	Interest on loan. Refers to No. 131. 13,000% paid. Minister for Foreign Affairs says no more can be paid at present	208
220	Sir A. Nicolson ..	29 Tel.	19,	Turkish military preparations on Russian and Persian frontiers. Refers to No. 167. Minister for Foreign Affairs reports explanations and assurances of Turkish Ambassador, and suggests we should express satisfaction to the Porte	208
221	Mr. Marling ..	48 Tel.	19,	Rumoured increase of Russian Consular staff at Seistan. His Majesty's Consul reports. Russian colleague denies authenticity of	208
222	" ..	49 Tel.	19,	German activity at Tehran. Reports recrudescence of, on occasion of attack on M. Mornard in Assembly. Urgent necessity of checking	209
223	" ..	50 Tel.	19,	Interest on loan. Refers to No. 219. Balance plus overdue interest paid	209
224	Mr. Cartwright ..	27	17,	Dr. Hugo Grothe's travels in Asia Minor. Transmits Memorandum summarizing press interview. Dr. Grothe said to have received financial assistance from the Kaiser	209
225	India Office ..	..	18,	Indo-European Department and Borasjun-Mohammerah telegraph line. Refers to No. 160. Transmits Minute by Mr. Kirk estimating cost of repairs and maintenance	211
226	" ..	..	19,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Refers to No. 227, paragraph 3. Transmits secret letter from Government of India and Memoranda by Mr. Kirk. Concurs in course proposed in No. 197	211
227	" ..	..	19,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Transmits Minute by Mr. Kirk. Discusses questions raised in No. 102	218
228	Imperial Bank of Persia ..	..	19,	Maintenance of Nasratabad office. Transmits letter addressed to India Office	220
229	Sir N. O'Connor ..	43 Tel.	20,	Turco-Persian Frontier Commission. Transmits telegram from Urumia, No. 17, reporting situation approaching to deadlock	221
230	Mr. Marling ..	51 Tel.	20,	Imperial Bank of Persia. Manager has resigned	221
231	" ..	52 Tel.	20,	Request for German Customs officials probably made by Eltesham-es-Sultaneh. Minister for Foreign Affairs denies that application was made to German Legation. Refers to No. 222	221

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232	To Sir A. Nicolson ..	51 Tel.	Feb. 20, 1908	German proposals as to Customs official. To communicate substance of No. 222 to Minister for Foreign Affairs and urge strong joint representations to Persian Government	222
233	" ..	55 Tel.	20,	German proposals respecting Customs officials. Refers to No. 232. In view of No. 231, is leaving question of making representations or not to discretion of Mr. Marling and M. de Hartwig	222
234	To Sir N. O'Connor ..	38 Tel.	20,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 220. To inform Porte we are glad to hear of assurances given at St. Petersburg, but are anxious as to future	222
235	India Office ..	..	20,	Capture of Dayir pirates. Transmits telegram to Viceroy respecting appreciation of services of Captain Hickley and Khan of Bander Rigi	222
236	Sir A. Nicolson ..	31 Tel.	21,	Military preparations on Turkish frontier. Has given substance of No. 234 to M. Isvolsky, who will telegraph same to Constantinople	223
237	" ..	32 Tel.	21,	German activity in Tehran. Refers to No. 232. M. de Hartwig will be instructed similarly. Delivery of representations will be left to his and Mr. Marling's discretion	223
238	Mr. Marling ..	53 Tel.	21,	Turkish Ambassador has left Tehran. Refers to No. 175	223
239	To Treasury ..	..	21,	Advance to Persia. Refers to No. 247. Part XII. Transmits Memorandum in No. 181. Asks views as to manner of (a) bringing matter before Parliament, and (b) adjusting liabilities between Imperial and Indian Exchequers	223
240	Sir N. O'Connor ..	74	17,	Turkish claims on Persian frontier. Impossible as yet to define. Reports representations to Minister for Foreign Affairs and action of Porte	224
241	India Office ..	..	21,	Consular guard at Shiraz. Refers to No. 194. As situation is still insecure, sowars will have to be retained for the six months sanctioned by Treasury	225
241*	Sir A. Nicolson ..	92	21,	Russian and Turkish military preparations. Transmits official announcement respecting	225*
242	Sir N. O'Connor ..	45 Tel.	24,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits telegram from Urumia reporting intention of Tahir Pasha to leave as question is reduced to interpretation of Treaty of Erzeroum. Precarious situation	225
243	" ..	46 Tel.	24,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 242. Gives explanations of the Porte. Mr. Wratislaw's account not confirmed by Persian Ambassador. Tahir Pasha said by Minister for Foreign Affairs to be instructed to remain	225
244	Mr. Marling ..	54 Tel.	24,	Turco-Persian frontier. Vice-Consul at Tabreez reports that Turkish troops have left Soujboulak. Persian authorities will return shortly	225

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245	To Mr. Marling ..	38 Tel.	Feb. 24, 1908	Guard for Oil Syndicate employes at Ahwaz. Refers to No. 169. Syndicate agree best solution is for Manager to pay guards direct	226
246	To India Office ..	..	24,	Military Attaché at Meshed. Refers to No. 339, Part XI. Transmits No. 198. Should be maintained. Asks views ..	226
247	Mr. Marling ..	55 Tel.	25,	Turco-Persian frontier. Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs thanks His Majesty's Government for successful action taken respecting Soujboulak. Ex-Governor of Urumia sent there	226
248	To Mr. Marling ..	21	25,	Turkish aggressions on Persian frontier. Apprehensions of Sheikh of Mohammerah. Refers to No. 205. Transmits No. 249. To have Sheikh informed His Majesty's Government are fully alive to. Concurs in suggestion as to gun-boat ..	226
249	To Sir N. O'Connor ..	75	25,	Turco-Persian frontier dispute and position of Sheikh of Mohammerah. Transmits Nos. 205 and 248. To obtain telegraphic information from Bussorah and Bagdad of any Turkish aggressions to the south ..	227
250	Nil.				
251	Mr. Marling ..	23	8,	Messrs. Lynch's construction account for Ahwaz-Ispahan road. Refers to No. 202. Reports satisfactory answer from Khans..	227
252	" "	24	14,	Minting contract for Imperial Bank of Persia. Refers to No. 283, Part XII. Reports negotiations with Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Finance. Opposition likely ..	228
253	" "	25	14,	Increase of Russian guards at Azerbaijan. Reports heated debate in Assembly, and action taken as regards dismissal and re-instatement of M. Mornard	229
254	" "	26	14,	Oil Syndicate and Bakhtiari Khans. Refers to No. 60. Transmits correspondence respecting payment of instalment due in November. Comments	231
255	" "	27	14,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Reports action with Russian colleague. Discusses means of carrying out	232
256	" "	28	14,	Overdue interest on 1903-4 loan. Refers to No. 412, Part XII. Describes further developments	233
257	" "	29	14,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to Nos. 43 and 47. Transmits despatch from Consul at Kermanshah respecting situation in Khanikin and Pusht-i-kuk region ..	235
258	" "	30	14,	Subsidy to German school. Reports unconstitutional action of Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh and indignation of Assembly and Anjuman. Comments on undesirability of ..	236
259	" "	31	14,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits further note from Persian Government describing recent events near Soujboulak. Mr. Wratishaw confirms accuracy of statements in No. 199	236

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261	Mr. Marling ..	56 Tel.	26,	Oil Syndicate. Refers to No. 245. Can he use argument with the Khans that extra Consular guards will be maintained until satisfactory arrangement for native guards is reached?	238
262	" "	57 Tel.	26,	Belgium customs officials. Asks for information. Has not received Nos. 232 and 233	239
263	" "	58 Tel.	26,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 247. Soujboulak is still held by Kurdish tribes and by a Turkish force	239
264	Sir A. Nicolson ..	33 Tel.	26,	Persian circular telegram respecting Turkish aggressions. Refers to No. 186. Minister for Foreign Affairs' views as to emphasizing special position of Great Britain and Russia as mediating Powers	239
265	To Mr. Marling ..	39 Tel.	26,	Shiraz escort. Increased strength will be maintained for six months. Refers to No. 176	239
266	" "	41 Tel.	26,	Telegraph lines exchange. Refers to No. 170. States position as to Indian and Indo-European Departments	240
267	" "	42 Tel.	26,	Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line. Refers to No. 171. Agreement to be recorded by exchange of Memoranda	240
268	" "	45 Tel.	26,	Persian Customs officials. Refers to Nos. 232, 233, and 262. To confer with Russian colleague as to advisability of representations	240
269	To Sir A. Nicolson ..	59 Tel.	26,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Gives views as to which lines should be dealt with first. Memorandum by bag	240
270	M. Rabino to Imperial Bank of Persia (communicated by Sir L. Griffin)	..	8,	Statement of indebtedness of Persian Government to Russian and Imperial Banks ..	241
271	India Office ..	..	25,	Telegraph lines exchange. Refers to No. 227. Transmits correspondence respecting British signaller at Turbat	243
272	Mr. Marling ..	59 Tel.	27,	Payment of guards by Oil Syndicate at Ahwaz. Captain Lorimer recommends not pressing the question, and not removing the Indian guard for six months. Payment of November instalment left to his discretion	244
273	To Sir A. Nicolson ..	62 Tel.	27,	Turkish aggression in Persia. Refers to No. 264. Is averse, for the present, to take action suggested by M. Iavolsky ..	244
274	India Office ..	..	28,	German flag on native vessels in Persian Gulf. Transmits telegram from Viceroy, dated 26th	244
275	Sir N. O'Connor ..	49 Tel.	28,	Intention of Tahir Pasha to leave Urumia. Transmits telegram from Urumia reporting. Minister for Foreign Affairs denies Persian colleague has satisfactory assurances as to evacuation of Soujboulak..	245

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275*	Mr. Marling ..	60 Tel.	Feb. 28, 1908	Attempt on Shah's life. Reports ..	245*
276	To Sir A. Nicolson ..	54	28,	M. Bizot's instructions. Transmits No. 218. To inquire if the Russian Government approve, as we do ..	245
277	To India Office ..	..	28,	German flag on native boats at Lingah. Transmits No. 201. Proposes to await further report ..	245
278	Mr. Marling ..	62 Tel.	29,	Turco-Persian frontier. Soujboulak. Refers to No. 275. Minister for Foreign Affairs states only a few troops remain awaiting transport. Izzet Pasha has left ..	246
279	" ..	63 Tel.	29,	Attempt on life of Shah. Refers to No. 275*. Reports as to reasons for ..	246
280	Sir A. Nicolson ..	36 Tel.	29,	England, Russia, and Turco-Persian disputes. Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks evacuation of Soujboulak a good occasion for pointing out special part played by two Powers ..	246
281	Sir N. O'Connor ..	50 Tel. Confidential	Mar. 1,	Turco-Persian frontier. Transmits telegram from Urumia reporting Tahir Pasha has left Urumia for Serai. He is said to have secret instructions ..	247
282	" ..	51 Tel.	1,	Turco-Persian frontiers. Refers to No. 281. Reports further instructions sent to Turkish Commissioner to remain at Urumia and endeavour to reach solution. Minister for Foreign Affairs says his departure must be due to secret instructions ..	247
283	Sir A. Nicolson ..	86	Feb. 18,	Turkish military preparations. Refers to No. 186. Reports conversation with M. Isvolsky discussing ..	247
284	" ..	87*	18,	Protection for Shah in a foreign Legation. Has spoken to Minister for Foreign Affairs in sense of No. 185. He will probably agree to course proposed ..	248
285	" ..	90	20,	Turkish military preparations on Russian and Persian frontiers. Minister for Foreign Affairs reports his conversation with Turkish colleague and asks for action at Constantinople ..	248
286	" ..	93	21,	Turkish military preparations and aggressions in Persia. Reports conversation with M. Isvolsky on the instructions sent to Sir N. O'Connor and the validity of Porte's assurances ..	249
287	" ..	94	21,	German officials for Persia. Reports conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs who has telegraphed to Tehran instructions similar to those proposed by us. ..	249
288	" ..	101	26,	Turkish aggressions in Persia. Refers to No. 186. Transmits letter from M. Isvolsky expressing readiness to join in representations to Persian Government as to their protest being addressed to all the Powers ..	250
289	Sir N. O'Connor ..	85	22,	Turco-Persian frontier. Political status of Mergavar. Transmits letter from Persian colleague inclosing note from Porte of 1876, showing Mergavar is Persian ..	251

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291	Admiralty Confidential	29,	Vessel for sale to Persian Customs authorities. Refers to No. 422, Part XII. Regrets none is at their disposal ..	252
292	Mr. Marling ..	64 Tel.	Mar. 2,	German Bank. Suspicion that it will be opened in the autumn ..	252
293	" ..	65 Tel.	2,	Turco-Persian frontier and Persian circular. Refers to No. 273. Verbal communication in sense of No. 264 would be useful ..	252
294	" ..	66 Tel.	2,	European Advisers for Government Departments. Seriously contemplated by the Assembly ..	252
295	To Mr. Marling ..	47 Tel.	2,	Seistan telegraphs. Refers to No. 190. To await Russian explanations before instructing His Majesty's Consul. Inquires as to chances of obtaining Persian consent to exchange ..	253
296	" ..	52 Tel.	2,	Persian Minister in London. Refers to No. 294. If it seems advisable, to express surprise that he has not yet arrived ..	253
297	To Sir A. Nicolson ..	64 Tel.	2,	Seistan telegraph line. Refers to No. 190. To report Russian explanation of incident ..	253
298	" ..	65 Tel.	2,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 280. Agrees to representations at Tehran now that Soujboulak is evacuated. To telegraph the draft instructions to M. de Hartwig ..	253
299	" ..	66 Tel.	2,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to Nos. 282 and 281. To inquire and report how present situation is regarded by Russian Government ..	254
300	" ..	67 Tel.	2,	German officials for Persia. To inquire views of M. Isvolsky, and suggest joint representations at Tehran ..	254
301	" ..	55	2,	Exchange of telegraph lines. Refers to No. 269. Transmits No. 227. Instructs as to communication to M. Isvolsky ..	254
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303	Sir A. Nicolson ..	37 Tel.	3,	German officials for Persia. Refers to No. 300. M. Isvolsky has no information, but appreciates gravity of question ..	256
304	Sir N. O'Connor ..	52 Tel.	3,	Turco-Persian frontier. Refers to No. 282. Grand Vizier states Tahir Pasha has been instructed to return to Urumia ..	256
305	To Mr. Marling ..	53 Tel.	3,	Imperial Bank's minting contract. Refers to No. 252. To press Persian Government for no further delay in carrying out obligations ..	256
306	To India Office	3,	Guard for Oil Syndicate employees at Ahwaz. Transmits Nos. 261 and 272. Proposes to postpone decision as to retaining increased guard for more than six months ..	257

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308	Mr. Marling ..	67 Tel.	4,	Baron von Richthofen's conduct. Reports conversation with the German Minister, Count Quadt ..	257
309	To Mr. Marling ..	54 Tel.	4,	Ship for Persian Government. Refers to No. 422, Part XII. Admiralty have none suitable ..	258
310	To India Office	4,	Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line. Transmits No. 255. Asks views on Mr. Casey's proposal ..	258
311	India Office	4,	German flag on native boats at Lingah. Refers to No. 277. Concurs in proposal to await further report ..	258
312	Mr. Marling ..	68 Tel.	5,	Turco-Persian frontier. Gives Captain Haworth's information respecting detail of troops at Khanikin. Has authorized him to proceed there ..	259
313	India Office	5,	Capture of Dayir pirates. Transmits correspondence between Bushire, Tehran, and India, 15th December-17th January ..	259
314	"	5,	Shiraz escort. Transmits telegram to Viceroy of 2nd March, informing as in No. 265 ..	261
315	"	5,	Seistan branch of Imperial Bank. Transmits telegram to Viceroy inquiring as to continuance of payment of subsidy ..	262
316	"	5,	German flag on native dhows in Persian Gulf. Transmits telegram to Government of India, suspending action for the present ..	262
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ERRATA.

Page 48, No. 81, line 3. For "1897" read "1907."
 Page 69, No. 108, lines 1 and 2. For "No. 13 of yesterday" read "No. 22 of the 21st instant," and for "the same day" read "yesterday."
 Page 176, No. 187, line 13. Insert * after the word "letter," and, as a footnote, "* No. 188."
 Page 176, No. 188, line 1. For "25th" read "20th ultimo."
 Page 233, No. 236, line 2. For "No. 34" read "No. 38."
 Page 235, No. 257, line 12. For "13th" read "11th."
 Page 254, No. 301, line 1. For "20th" read "26th."
 Page 269, No. 335, line 1. For "10th" read "8th."

CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Persia.

PART XIII.

[8]

No. 1.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1, 1908.)

(No. 621.)

Sir,

Paris, December 31, 1907.

MR. LISTER saw the Political Director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs this afternoon, and inquired whether the French Government had been able to complete the appointment of M. Bizot as Financial Adviser to the Persian Government.

M. Louis answered that, as far as he knew, the position remained the same, and referred once more to the reasons for the delay which were communicated to you in my telegram No. 69 of the 25th instant. Mr. Lister said that these reasons had been duly reported to you, but suggested that, although they were no doubt sound in themselves, they dwindled almost to questions of detail when compared with the gravity of the situation which would be produced were the Germans enabled by the delay which they entailed to obtain the appointment of a Belgian official, who might fairly be expected to act as their tool.

Mr. Lister insisted once more on the importance which you attached to the appointment being completed without loss of time, and M. Louis promised to see to the matter again at once, and to communicate with me this evening.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANCIS BERTIE.

P.S.—Since this despatch was written I have received a letter from M. Louis stating that nothing further has occurred since his last conversation with Mr. Lister. The French Government telegraphed some ten days ago to Tehran to settle the last difficulties, and the Persian Minister in Paris assures the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs that he too has done so. As the Persian Government's reply has not yet been received, a further telegram is being sent this evening to the French Minister at Tehran, requesting him to expedite matters as much as possible.

F. B.

[1]

No. 2.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1, 1908.)

(No. 427.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, December 31, 1907.

TEHRAN situation.

Many thanks for the last paragraph of your telegram No. 216 of the 30th instant.

We are absolutely safe, I think; and I do not believe that an attack would be made on the Legation even if the Shah were in bast here.

[2]

No. 3.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1, 1908.)

(No. 428.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, December 31, 1907.

FINANCIAL Adviser.

The new draft contract has, so the French Minister informs me, arrived. With the support of the British and Russian Legations, M. de La Martinière hopes to be able to obtain from the Persian Government their consent to one modification in it that seems to possess some importance, *i.e.*, that M. Bizot shall have the title of Financial Adviser. This would prevent any other foreigner, such as M. Priem, from receiving an appointment incompatible with M. Bizot's position.

Reference is to your telegram No. 364 to St. Petersburg.

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No. 4.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 1.)

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 1, 1908.

ALLEGATIONS of German Chargé d'Affaires respecting attitude of French Minister.

The statement regarding which you inquire in your telegram No. 220 of the 31st December is absolutely untrue.

[42621]

No. 5.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 1, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN boundary dispute.

Please see telegram No. 37 from Mr. Wratislaw, and telegram from Tehran No. 425.

Following is to be considered confidential:—

Are measures of coercion in contemplation by Russian Government, or is there any ground for supposing that they are?

[42621]

No. 6.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 1, 1908.

I HAVE received your telegram No. 425 respecting dispute on Turco-Persian frontier.

You should endeavour to obtain information as to the accuracy of the report in question.

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No. 7.

Sir A. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 2.)

(No. 2.)

Sir,

Brussels, January 1, 1908.

THE Russian Minister came to see me yesterday, and read me the contents of a telegram from M. Isvolsky to the effect that M. Priem was intriguing with German support for the post of Financial Adviser ("Conseiller Financier") to the Shah; that the Russian, British, and French Governments were all of opinion that this post should be given to M. Bizot, the French financier who was being engaged to reorganize the finances of Persia; that the Belgian Representative at Tehran was adverse to the claim of M. Priem, and had telegraphed his views to the Belgian Government; and that I should shortly receive instructions from you to make a representation in that sense, in

concert with the Russian Legation here, to M. Davignon. M. de Giers added that the Russian Ambassador in Paris had been ordered to expedite as rapidly as possible the signature of M. Bizot's contract with the Persian Government.

I said that I was not unacquainted with the subject of M. de Giers' visit, as I had seen in the copies of despatches and telegrams from Tehran, which you sent me from time to time, an account of M. Priem's proceedings, and of the views entertained respecting them by our two Legations, but that I had not yet received any instruction from you to co-operate with him in the sense indicated. I should, of course, be happy to do so as soon as I was authorized. I had, however, derived from the reports from Tehran an impression that the Belgian Representative in Persia did not wish his name mentioned in connection with this matter. M. de Giers said that in that case we need not say anything about him to M. Davignon.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ARTHUR H. HARDINGE.

P.S.—Since writing this despatch I have had the honour to receive this morning the decyphers of your telegrams Nos. 8 and 9 of yesterday, and have written to my Russian colleague informing him that I am authorized to act with him.

A. H. H.

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No. 8.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 2.)

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, January 2, 1908.

PERSIAN Financial Adviser. Referring to your telegram No. 364 of the 30th December.

In telegraphing a day or two ago to the Russian Ambassador in Paris, M. Isvolsky had requested him to urge the French Government to settle the question as soon as possible and to waive matters of secondary importance. Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks it would hardly be necessary for him to dispatch another telegram on the subject. He is most anxious that there should be no further delay in the settlement of the question, and thought that perhaps Sir F. Bertie might support his Russian colleague.

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No. 9.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 2.)

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, January 2, 1908.

WITH reference to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 425 of the 30th December, and to your telegram No. 1 of the 1st instant.

I feel confident that the Russian Government would not take coercive measures without consultation with us, and I do not believe that there is the slightest intention on their part of taking such measures. The Russian Minister's observation to Mr. Marling may possibly have referred to pressure which, in order to arrive at a settlement of the frontier difficulty, the two Governments may eventually find it necessary to put on the Ottoman Government. M. Isvolsky proposes to confer with His Majesty's Government later on in regard to this matter.

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No. 10.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 2, 1908.

FRENCH Financial Adviser in Persia. Please refer to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 2 respecting Financial Adviser, and also to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 428 of last year on same subject.

Your Russian colleague should be informed of substance of the above telegrams.

It is possible that now it will not be necessary to make further representations on the subject.

[42728]

No. 11.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 2, 1908.

I HAVE received telegram No. 41 of the 29th December, from Urumia.

It is most important that negotiations respecting Turco-Persian frontier should not be broken off hastily. Persian Commissioner should be instructed by his Government accordingly.

[270]

No. 12.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 3.)

(No. 5.)

Sir,

Paris, January 2, 1908.

I TOOK advantage of an interview which I had with the President of the Council this morning to remind him of the importance of the signature as soon as possible of M. Bizot's contract as Financial Adviser to the Persian Government. I said that the German Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran had been very active, and there was danger lest he might succeed in obtaining the appointment of M. Priem, a Belgian with German sympathies, unless M. Bizot's contract were signed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANCIS BERTIE.

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No. 13.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 3.)

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 3, 1908.

I DO not believe there would be much difficulty, in case of need, in getting Shah down to Enzeli with a joint escort.

(Reference is to your telegram No. 216 of the 30th ultimo.)

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No. 14.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 3, 1908.

PERSIA. In reply to your telegram No. 269 of the 28th ultimo, we concur in view that British and Russian escort may accompany Shah to the coast if the situation renders such a course necessary.

[42395]

No. 15.

Foreign Office to Treasury.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 3, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, paraphrase of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, reporting the disquieting nature of the situation at Shiraz and recommending that the relieved escort should remain there, in addition to the reliefs who were almost due, until the situation should become calmer. This recommendation was approved by Sir E. Grey and agreed to by the Secretary of State for India. Instructions were accordingly sent to the Government of India.

I am to express Sir E. Grey's regret that, owing to an oversight, the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury were not consulted at the time, and to state

* See Part XII, No. 178.

that, if their Lordships concur, the expenditure involved will be equally divided between the British and Indian Exchequers in accordance with the usual procedure.

It has been ascertained by the Government of India that the probable cost will be 166l. 13s. 4d. (2,500 rupees), and I am to say that Sir E. Grey hopes that the Lords Commissioners will sanction the half of this sum being charged to British funds.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

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No. 16.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 4.)

(No. 1.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, January 4, 1908.

PERSIA. French Financial Adviser. My telegram No. 69 of the 25th ultimo.

M. de Etter, of the Russian Embassy, informs me that the Political Director of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs suggests, as a result of his interview with him, that the British and Russian Legations at Tehran should press the Persian Government to describe M. Bizot as Financial Adviser in his contract. The Persian Government are reluctant to do this, but the French Government consider that such a designation is indispensable, for should it not be inserted in the contract, the title and functions of the post might be given later on to M. Priem or some one else.

M. Louis is of opinion that the other amendments suggested can be arranged without difficulty. He spoke to me to-day to the same effect at the reception at the Elysée.

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No. 17.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 4.)

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 4, 1908.

I AM warning the Persian Government as regards situation at Kerman, which His Majesty's Consul reports as threatening. He also states that a general attack on property, involving danger to Europeans, is to be apprehended.

The town is still without a Governor.

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No. 18.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6, 1908.)

(No. 627.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, December 23, 1907.

M. ISVOLSKY called upon me on the 21st instant, and said that he wished to speak about the situation in Tehran, as he had received some disquieting telegrams from M. de Hartwig. It appeared that the life of the Shah was in some danger, and that the Zil-es-Sultan was intriguing with the Assembly to depose His Majesty and to place the Valiahd on the throne with himself as Regent. In view of the ambitious and unscrupulous character of the Zil-es-Sultan, it was possible that no long time would elapse before the Valiahd would be ousted, and the Zil-es-Sultan become Shah. Both the British and Russian Governments had recognized the Valiahd as Heir Apparent, and M. Isvolsky considered that the two Governments could hardly remain passive spectators of a palace intrigue of the above nature.

In respect to the relations between the Shah and the Assembly, it would seem that the latter was gaining the upper hand, and as the deposition of His Majesty had been proclaimed at Tabreez and other places, it was clear that his tenure of the throne had become exceedingly precarious. His Majesty had been making daily appeals to the Russian Legation to assist him, but the same reply had been given to him as had been communicated to the Assembly, which had also sought Russian support, that Russia intended to follow a policy of strict non-intervention in the conflict which had arisen. He understood that this was also the intention of His Majesty's Government, but, as the situation was extremely critical, he would like to have my opinion as to what was the best course to follow, as I had had some experience of Persia.

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C

I told his Excellency that my experience was rather ancient, as it dated from twenty years ago, and the present conditions were very different from any which I had witnessed. In respect to the intrigues of Zil-es-Sultan, it seemed to me that the two Legations would be justified in giving him a word of warning. When we had transferred to the Russian Government the care over the interests of that personage, he had been given, I believed, to understand that the privilege was accorded to him on the condition that he remained loyal to the dynasty and to the institutions of the country. There were, therefore, reasonable grounds for giving His Highness a warning. He was I knew, an intriguer, but he was not a bold man, as I had seen him in a crisis, and he had shown but little courage.

With respect to the relations between the Shah and the Assembly, I confessed that the situation was so complicated that I could not clearly see an issue, and it seemed to me that a policy of abstention was the wisest course. A false move might have unfortunate consequences, and any intervention might have the appearance of taking either the side of the Shah or of the Assembly, and I did not know whether the Assembly or the Political Committees were the dominating factors. In any case, I should think it would be prudent to be guided largely by the opinions of our Representatives on the spot.

M. Isvolsky said that he would like to think over the matter, and he would be glad if I would call on him on the following day.

I paid his Excellency a visit yesterday, and he told me that he had telegraphed to Count Benckendorff, instructing him to solicit the views of His Majesty's Government as to an asylum being afforded to the Shah in some Legation in case his life was in imminent danger, and that he should be protected by British and Russian guards. The choice of the Legation should be left to the Diplomatic Body, and he thought it would be well to make the question an international one; and the Shah had the same right of asylum as any of his subjects, who occasionally greatly profited by it. He had also requested Count Benckendorff to ascertain whether His Majesty's Government would be disposed to associate themselves with the Russian Government in addressing a word of warning to the Zil-es-Sultan. His Highness had been requested by the Shah to leave Tehran for a time, but had refused to do so, and on being pressed had declared that he was under British protection. Since dispatching the above telegrams he had received a further telegram from M. de Hartwig, which reported that he and Mr. Marling proposed to take a certain course of action, and for which he had not had time to obtain official sanction. His Excellency's Chancery was engaged in decyphering a second telegram from M. de Hartwig, which, he said, probably gave the details of the action which it was intended to adopt.

I told M. Isvolsky that the line which the two Representatives were taking was probably that of which I had just received information, and I read to him the substance of Mr. Marling's telegram No. 404, which recounted the representations which they were to make on the 22nd instant to the Shah, and also the communications which they would address to the Zil-es-Sultan and the Assembly. His Excellency observed that the course which the two Representatives proposed to follow seemed a reasonable one, and he would wait to see the results. He remarked that the German Chargé d'Affaires appeared to have been unnecessarily active, and to have warmly espoused the cause of the Assembly. He had understood that this gentleman's impetuosity on a former occasion had been disapproved by Prince Bilow, but he had returned to Tehran, and seemed to be pursuing a similar active policy. His Excellency said that his great desire was to act in complete accord with His Majesty's Government, and to abstain as far as possible from any intervention in the present imbroglio.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

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No. 19.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6, 1908.)

(No. 629.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, December 25, 1907.

I CALLED upon M. Isvolsky this afternoon and communicated to him the substance of Mr. Marling's telegram No. 412 of the 24th instant, his Excellency had received an identic telegram from M. de Hartwig, but he was unable to see what action either Government could well take in the circumstances. If the political Committees or others had decided to dethrone or to assassinate the Shah, the two

Governments could not prevent such an act, and the efforts of the two Representatives to establish a *modus vivendi* between the Shah and the Assembly seemed to have led to no result, as the latter had, so far as he could gather, refused to entertain the intervention of the two Legations, and had said that it would settle matters itself with His Majesty. Moreover, neither the Shah, nor the Government, nor the Assembly was apparently able to exercise any influence, which had passed to the political Committees who dominated the situation. The sole desire of the Russian Government was to see order and tranquillity restored, and it was a matter of comparative indifference to them which Shah or which Government undertook the task. They had no predilection for this or that Shah, or for any special Cabinet; all they desired was that the present state of anarchy should cease. If there were a Shah of some character and of some energy, it might have been of advantage to give him support; but such a personage did not exist. He repeated to me that the Russian Government were determined to abstain from any military intervention. A special Committee of the Cabinet had been examining this point, and it had been unanimously decided that it would be an unwise step to intervene *manu militari*, or even to threaten a military demonstration.

I asked him what he thought of the reported action of the German Chargé d'Affaires, who appeared to have complicated a delicate and dangerous situation. His Excellency said that he had just been speaking with the German Ambassador on the subject, and had told Count Pourtalès that there had been hopes that the action of the British and Russian Representatives would have had satisfactory results if M. Richthofen had not intervened and in great measure wrecked the work of M. de Hartwig and of Mr. Marling. Count Pourtalès had positively denied that M. Richthofen had taken any active part in the present difficulties, and that he had only visited the Medjlis for the purpose of obtaining information. Count Pourtalès had added that he understood that the British, Russian, and French Representatives had intervened in the differences between the Shah and the Assembly with a view of obtaining privileges in return for their efforts to effect a settlement.

M. Isvolsky told his Excellency that such an insinuation was quite baseless, and that M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling, who represented the two Powers most vitally and directly interested in Persian affairs, had simply intervened with a view of endeavouring to arrange matters between the Shah and the Assembly in the hope of thereby leading to a re-establishment of order. It was ridiculous to imagine that at a moment when there was practically no Government in Persia, and when the whole country was in a state of complete anarchy, any one would dream of trying to obtain privileges or concessions. The French Minister had not intervened directly, though he had very naturally been consulted by his two colleagues.

M. Isvolsky remarked to me that if the German Chargé d'Affaires had given his Government to understand that Russia and Great Britain had some selfish motive in their action, it was most malicious on his part. Germany, who could not digest the Anglo-Russian Convention, was evidently, he said, determined to cause both Russia and Great Britain as much trouble as possible whenever an opportunity presented itself.

He did not consider more could be done than wait on events and see how they developed. Perhaps the immediate danger might pass away, as there were frequent vicissitudes and changes in the course of Persian events. He understood that I did not believe in the two parties or the several parties coming to an open conflict.

I said that when I was in Persia, I did not estimate the fighting qualities or the bellicose disposition of the Persians very highly. They may have changed since then. But whatever might be their physical courage, they were quite capable of assassinating individuals, and of causing both Great Britain and Russia much trouble and anxiety. The lamentable fact was that there appeared to be no individual or body of men who were in any way capable of mastering the situation; and we seemed to be witnessing the decomposition of a country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

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No. 20.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6, 1908.)

(No. 633.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, December 28, 1907.

I COMMUNICATED to M. Isvolsky the instructions with which you had furnished His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, and which were recorded in your telegram No. 210 to that gentleman; and I also informed his Excellency that you were ready to agree that the Shah, should he seek refuge in a Legation, might be placed under the protection of Russian and British guards, provided it was understood that there was no political object in this measure, but that it was simply adopted for the safety of His Majesty's life.

I received this morning a private letter from M. Isvolsky, of which I have the honour to transmit a copy, in which he states that he is ready to furnish M. de Hartwig with similar instructions. There is one amendment which, however, he would wish to see made in the instructions. You were pleased to tell Mr. Marling that if satisfactory guarantees were offered that the Shah's life would be spared and that he would be permitted to leave the country, he might be handed over to the authorities in the event of his having taken asylum in the British Legation. M. Isvolsky observes that the Persian authorities could give no guarantee which would be considered as sufficient; and he therefore proposes that if the Shah is to leave the country he should be escorted to the frontier by a combined guard of Russians and British. He will await your reply before sending the instructions to M. de Hartwig.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 20.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Saint-Petersbourg, le 14 (27) Décembre, 1907.

AYANT pris connaissance du résumé des instructions envoyées à Mr. Marling et tout prêt à munir de mon côté M. de Hartwig d'instructions analogues, il me semble cependant désirable d'y introduire certaines modifications. La première de ces modifications tendant à accorder au Schah, en cas de best dans une des deux Légations, la sauvegarde des escortes combinées Russe et Anglaise, a déjà été consentie par Sir Edward Grey, ainsi qu'il résulte de votre billet de ce matin. La seconde concernerait l'éventualité de la remise du Schah aux autorités Persanes pour être reconduit hors du pays. Je suis d'avis qu'aucune garantie donnée par ces autorités ne pourrait être considérée comme suffisante, et que, si le cas se présente, il serait préférable d'assurer au Schah la protection des escortes combinées Russe et Anglaise jusqu'à la frontière.

J'espère que Sir Edward Grey voudra bien partager mon opinion et munir Mr. Marling d'instructions dans ce sens. J'attends pour envoyer mes instructions à M. de Hartwig une réponse à ce qui précède.

Votre, &c.

(Signé) ISWOLSKY.

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No. 21.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 2.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 2, 1908.

I SUGGESTED to M. Isvolsky, in accordance with your instructions, that he should request the Russian Minister at Brussels to concert with his British colleague to explain confidentially to the Belgian Government that the appointment of M. Priem either as Administrator of Customs or as Financial Adviser in Persia would not be in accordance with the desires of the British and Russian Governments; and I have the honour to inclose copy of a private letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky, stating that he has sent the necessary instructions. He also adds that he has requested M. de Nelidoff to urge M. Pichon to hasten the signature of the contract with M. Bizot.

I called on M. Isvolsky yesterday evening, and said that from a telegram which you had received from His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris, the substance of which I read to him (Sir F. Bertie's telegram No. 69), you were not quite satisfied that sufficient expedition was being shown in the appointment of M. Bizot, and that you would be glad to know whether His Excellency could suggest any further action in the matter.

M. Isvolsky replied that, in the telegrams which he had sent a day or two ago to M. de Nelidoff, he had requested his Excellency to press the French Government not to dwell on matters of secondary importance which could be arranged later, but to lose no time in definitely settling the appointment of M. Bizot. It would, perhaps, be of advantage if Sir F. Bertie were to support his Russian colleague in urging this point on M. Pichon. He added that he was most anxious to see the appointment made as soon as possible, and thereby cut short the intrigues which were busy against it.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 21.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Saint-Petersbourg, le 17 (30) Décembre, 1907.

M. DE HARTWIG vient de me rendre compte par télégraphe des agissements de M. Priem en vue d'obtenir la place de M. Mornard, ou bien d'être nommé Conseiller Financier auprès du Gouvernement du Schah au lieu de M. Bizot. Il paraît que le Ministre de Belgique à Téhéran a mis son Gouvernement au courant de cette affaire, en attirant entre autres son attention sur le fait que la nomination éventuelle de M. Priem en qualité d'Administrateur des Douanes Persanes aurait des suites fâcheuses pour les autres employés Belges. Le Ministre de France a de même télégraphié à son Gouvernement à ce sujet, en se prononçant également contre une pareille nomination.

De mon côté, j'ai chargé notre Ministre à Bruxelles de s'entendre avec son collègue d'Angleterre afin d'informer confidentiellement le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Belgique que le retour de M. Priem au service Persan ne répondrait pas au désir des Cabinets de Londres et de Saint-Petersbourg.

En outre, j'ai cru nécessaire d'envoyer des instructions à notre Ambassadeur à Paris, en le priant de se mettre en rapports avec M. Pichon pour hâter dans la mesure du possible la signature du contrat avec M. Bizot, afin de mettre M. Priem en face d'un fait accompli.

Votre, &c.

(Signé) ISWOLSKY.

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No. 22.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6, 1908.)

(No. 560.)

Sir,

Berlin, December 27, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that I called upon Herr von Schön this morning, and his Excellency informed me that he had sent some documents about the Abu Musa incident to Count Metternich for communication to you. He did not in the least wish to treat this as a political question, and it was being dealt with in the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office, but the papers had taken it up, and it was perhaps unfortunate that a British gun-boat should have taken an active part in a commercial dispute. I replied that as the German Ambassador in London was going to talk to you on the subject I did not propose to discuss it with him, but I had no doubt that you would be glad to hear that the German Government were not disposed to attach political importance to it. Herr von Schön went on to say that Germany had no political interests in Persia, and gave me to understand that the activity of the German Chargé d'Affaires had been by no means agreeable to him, and it would probably be necessary before long to appoint a new German Minister to Tehran. I said that I had heard that Baron von Richthofen had displayed undesirable activity.

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not only during the present crisis but also when he had acted as Chargé d'Affaires on a previous occasion. Herr von Schön interrupted me by saying that there was another foreign Representative at Tehran who seemed to wish to give himself undue importance, and he could not understand why the French Minister should have put forward a claim to be present with the English and Russian Representatives at the ceremony of the Shah's taking the oath to the Constitution to the exclusion of the other foreign Representatives. It was only natural, in consequence of the special position which England and Russia occupied in Persia, that their Representatives should be present at the ceremony, but if the French Minister were there, there could be no reason for the other diplomatists to be kept away. I said that this was the first I had heard of such a claim being put forward by the French Minister. I knew that he had warmly supported his English and Russian colleagues, and I thought I should have heard if he had sought to obtain an exceptional position for himself. Herr von Schön, however, seemed certain of his facts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

[477] No. 23.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 1.)
Sir,

Berlin, January 2, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report a semi-official announcement in this evening's "North German Gazette" that Count Quadt-Wykradt-Isny, at present German Consul-General at Calcutta, is about to be appointed Minister at Tehran, and that he will shortly proceed to his new post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANK C. LASCELLES.

[514] No. 24.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 8.)
Sir,

Paris, January 3, 1908.

I RECEIVED yesterday evening your telegrams Nos. 1, 2, and 3 of the 2nd instant, respecting the appointment of a French Financial Adviser in Persia.

The Russian Ambassador is at present confined to his bed, and the Councillor of Embassy is absent on leave. I saw, however, M. de Etter, First Secretary to the Russian Embassy, at the Ministry of Justice to-day, where the Diplomatic Body was present at the departure of the body of the late Minister of Justice for the Gare de Lyon.

I informed M. de Etter of the substance of your telegrams, and he stated that M. de Nelidow had not up to the present made representations to M. Pichon on the instructions which he had received from St. Petersburg. M. Pichon had asked M. de Nelidow to pay him a visit, but, as his Excellency was confined to his bed, he had suggested that M. de Etter should go to the Quai d'Orsay in his place. M. Pichon had, however, replied that he had wished to see the Ambassador himself, to take leave of him before starting for Madrid.

M. de Etter came to see me this evening at the Embassy, after communicating to M. de Nelidow what I had said to him. He is to see the Political Director at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to-morrow morning on the subject of M. Bizot's appointment, and will inform him that my instructions are to support the representations made by the Russian Embassy.

As I have twice spoken to M. Clemenceau on the subject, and as I have also twice caused M. Louis to be informed of the views of His Majesty's Government as to the necessity for expediting a settlement of the matter, I do not propose to make a further representation to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs unless I hear from the Russian Ambassador that he considers it desirable that I should do so.

M. Pichon was at the ceremony at the Ministry of Justice this afternoon, but I was not able to have any conversation with him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 25.

[465]

Sir A. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 8.)
Sir,

Brussels, January 3, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report, in continuation of my despatch No. 2 of the 1st instant, that, having been unable to see M. Davignon yesterday, the Russian Minister and I called together on his Excellency this morning. M. de Giers was of opinion that this was the best way of making the communication desired by our two Governments, and as he is my senior (having been ten years in this country), I told him that I should defer to his views with regard to the procedure to be adopted by us, and that I thought that, when we were received by M. Davignon, he should open the conversation with the latter. I agreed with him that a verbal communication would be sufficient, and that it would not be necessary to add to it a joint or identic statement in writing.

On our being shown into the Foreign Minister's room, M. de Giers informed his Excellency that he had been directed by M. Isvolsky to make a confidential communication to him to the effect that M. Priem's return to the Persian service was, in the opinion of the Russian Government, undesirable and might occasion disagreements ("des désaccords"). M. Davignon asked whether M. Priem had left that service, and M. de Giers replied that he inferred that he had done so, from the employment in the instructions to him of the word "rentrée." I then observed that I had been instructed by you to associate myself with the representations which my Russian colleague had just made, and that you agreed with the Russian Government in thinking that M. Priem's re-employment by the Shah would be very inexpedient. M. Davignon asked if we also objected to M. Mornard, who he understood was now the successor of M. Naus, and we replied that our instructions only mentioned M. Priem. That gentleman was believed to be aiming at obtaining the post of Financial Adviser to the Shah, and thus encroaching on the functions of the French expert whose engagement for the purpose of reorganizing the finances of Persia was desired by our two Governments.

M. Davignon said he would carefully examine the matter of which we had spoken to him. He had had a good many reports about the Belgian officials in Persia, but the situation there, which he had discussed at length with the late M. t'Serstevens, was constantly changing, and he was not sure whether M. Priem was still in the service of the Belgian State or had severed his connection with it, in which latter case, as he would have become a mere private Belgian subject, the Belgian Foreign Office could hardly exercise control over his proceedings. Belgium had sent some very good and some very bad Customs officials to Persia, and their character and "mentalité" often underwent an extraordinary change in their new Eastern environment. The King had just approved the appointment to Tehran of a new Minister, a very active and capable man, and he (M. Davignon) would lose no time in going into the question with him, and would communicate with us again. His Excellency was evidently disposed to do all he could to meet our wishes, and we accordingly thanked him and withdrew.

When M. Priem has finally resigned all connection with the Belgian Administration or is merely "en disponibilité," it is, I think, unlikely that he will persist in his efforts to be re-employed by the Shah, should the Belgian Legation at Tehran or the Foreign Office here give him a hint that his action is disapproved by the Belgian Government. Any position which he could obtain in Persia would in the present state of affairs there be precarious, and he doubtless looks to re-employment under Government at home.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ARTHUR H. HARDINGE.

[619]

No. 26.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 4.)
(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 6, 1908.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, No. 1, dated the 5th instant and received to-day:—

"On the 2nd instant the Turkish Commissioner went to the village of Balu, which is inhabited by Sunnis, taking with him an escort of fifty soldiers; he had not been invited to do so. This village lies 6 miles to the north-north-west of Urmia. He

then invited the Persian Commissioner to come and meet him there, which he did yesterday. They discussed the question of where the Commission shall assemble, the Persian proposing Urmia, and Tahir Pasha at first suggesting Van or possibly a village in the Selmas district, but he ended by saying that he must wait for instructions. The Persians prefer Urmia itself, though they would not object to some place in the neighbourhood.

"The two missing members of the Persian Commission are expected to arrive here soon."

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No. 27.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 6, 1908.

I HAVE sent the following to Mr. Wratislaw (repeating my message to St. Petersburg and Tehran) in reply to his telegram No. 1:—

"The Ottoman Government appear to be indifferent as to where the Commission meets, and are only anxious that there should be no delay."

In reply to a question of the Grand Vizier's to-day, I said that I thought it best that the Commission should choose the place of meeting for themselves.

[611]

No. 28.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, January 6, 1908.

PERSIA. With reference to your telegram No. 7 of the 3rd instant.

Instructions have been sent by M. Isvolsky to the Russian Minister at Tehran in conformity with those dispatched in your telegram No. 210 to Mr. Marling, with the modification that, should the need arise, a combined Russian and British escort may conduct the Shah to the frontier.

[615]

No. 29.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 6.)

(No. 6.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 6, 1908.

ACTING on instructions from his Government, German Chargé d'Affaires is endeavouring to extract from Persian Government a declaration as to whether Island of Abu Musa is or is not Persian territory.

Do you wish me officially to remind Minister for Foreign Affairs of 1904 incident, and warn him against any endeavour again to put forward Persian claim to the island? I have already done so privately.

[615]

No. 30.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 6, 1908.

ABU MUSA incident.

In reply to your telegram No. 6 of to-day's date, I consider that your reminder is enough, and no official representation need be made by you in the matter.

[42626]

No. 31.

Foreign Office to Imperial Bank of Persia.

Foreign Office, January 6, 1908.

Sir,

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to inform you that His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran has reported that on the 26th ultimo he received a request from the Imperial Bank of Persia that twelve extra men who were on their way to join the escort at Ispahan, and were then nearing Shiraz, should be allowed to bring up twenty-five mule-loads of silver coin, as, owing to the insecurity of the roads, the Persian post had declined to accept this consignment.

Sir E. Grey has assented to this request being complied with, provided that the Consul at Shiraz sees no objection, and on condition that the Bank shall accept all responsibility for any loss which may be incurred.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[705]

No. 32.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 7.)

(No. 8.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 7, 1908.

FRENCH Financial Adviser for Persia.

M. de La Martinière has succeeded in inducing Persian Government to agree to give M. Bizot the required title. He has also obtained some minor concessions relating to indemnity in the case of the contract being broken, and travelling expenses. Telegraphic instructions to Persian Representative in Paris are promised by Minister for Foreign Affairs, authorizing him to sign a contract securing desiderata of French Minister of Finance, and on lines proposed by him.

Judging from my last conversation with Mushir-ed-Dowleh, and especially in view of fact that German Chargé d'Affaires continues to push M. Priem, I do not think it would be possible to obtain more.

[797]

No. 33.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 8.)

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 8, 1908.

IMPERIAL Bank of Persia.

Following is confidential:—

I am informed very confidentially by Manager of Bank that his position is being rendered intolerable by the lack of confidence which Board are showing in him, and that he may be compelled to send in his resignation.

Should he do so either German Bank or National Bank would, I believe, secure his services. Both have long ago approached him with that purpose. An amalgamation of the two projects is also a possible contingency. This would take the form of a bank with a small capital, nominally national, but partly German, and possessed of all the Concessions secured by its Charter to the original National Bank. Prospects of success of such a bank would be very good, as Government business now done by Imperial Bank would soon be secured by it, and many of his old customers might follow Mr. Rabino if he were Manager. There would be little risk to the German capital involved, and the facilities for acquiring profitable Concessions would be considerable.

[41741/07]

No. 34.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 8, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 20th November, 1907, relative to the proposals of Messrs. Ellinger and Co. for the exploitation of the red oxide on the

[1563]

E

Island of Hormuz, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, copy of a letter from that firm, which they request may be substituted for their previous letter of the 19th October. It will be seen that the text of the assurances which Messrs. Ellinger desire to receive from His Majesty's Government has been revised in accordance with the result of the communications which have already passed between the India and Foreign Offices and which was communicated privately to Messrs. Ellinger and Co.

The proposed enterprise appears to Sir E. Grey to be a most desirable one, which is deserving of cordial support from His Majesty's Government. He is therefore disposed, subject to Mr. Morley's concurrence, to give to Messrs. Ellinger and Co. the assurances asked for, subject to the condition that they will only hold good so long as the enterprise remains British.

I am, however, to draw Mr. Morley's attention to the fact that the grant of these assurances involves the support by His Majesty's Government of a monopoly of the export of red oxide from Hormuz, and that, consequently, it will be inconsistent for His Majesty's Government to justify the action of the Sheikh of Shargah in regard to Messrs. Wonckhaus' contract for the export of red oxide from Abu Musa on the ground that it created a monopoly.

Mr. Morley is aware that Sir E. Grey has not suggested in the letter from this Department of the 28th ultimo that the question of a monopoly should be raised in replying to the German Government, but, in view of the fact that the Government of India based their recommendation to the Sheikh to cancel the Abu Musa Concession on that ground, he is of opinion that an understanding should be arrived at with the Government of India as to the basis on which the reply to the German Government should be framed, so as to exclude the argument in regard to a monopoly, as to the validity of which he has always felt great doubts.

Sir E. Grey would be glad to be favoured with an early answer to this communication.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[898] No. 35.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 6.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburg, January 9, 1908.*

PERSIA. Financial Adviser.

M. Isvolsky thinks that, as Persian Government have practically accepted the amendments proposed by the French Government in M. Bizot's contract, Russian and British Ambassadors in Paris might concert together to urge French Government to settle appointment finally. M. Isvolsky is telegraphing in this sense to M. de Nelidoff.

[882] No. 36.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 9.)

(No. 11.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 9, 1908.*

PLEASE refer to my telegrams Nos. 404 and 413 of the 21st and 24th December, 1907, respectively.

Until the 30th October it was impossible, owing to German intrigue, for Russian Minister and myself to carry out point 2 of our programme, namely, to communicate to Assembly the assurances we had asked for and received from His Majesty the Shah. On that date we addressed to President identic letters (copy inclosed in my despatch No. 283 of the 31st December by last messenger) informing him of the steps taken, and expressing our firm belief that His Majesty would stand by his pledges. On the 1th instant the letters were read in the Assembly.

German Chargé d'Affaires, on learning this, wrote a letter to President, apparently in terms a little stronger, but to precisely the same effect, and on the 7th instant this letter was read out in the Assembly.

Russian Minister declares that, to his absolute knowledge, German Chargé d'Affaires

neither asked nor obtained any such assurances as those to which he now lays claim, and there is every reason to believe that this is the case.

Evidently at German instigation, and with a view to internationalization of Persian internal affairs, Turkish Ambassador has also made a similar communication to the Assembly.

[956] No. 37.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 8.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 9, 1908.*

FRONTIER dispute between Turkey and Persia.

I learn from Count Benckendorff that a promise has been given by Tahir Pasha that he will recommend Ottoman Government to select Urumia as place where Frontier Commission should meet. Russian Ambassador at Constantinople has received instructions to support the recommendation of the Turkish Commissioner, and your Excellency should act in concert with M. Zinoview in the matter.

[785] No. 38.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 10.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 9, 1908.*

ANY discussion respecting Abu Musa with your German colleague should be avoided.

The island is not situated within the territories of the Persian Kingdom.

If the subject is again raised by M. de Richthofen, you should point out that, in accordance with Treaty obligations, the British Resident, acting on behalf of the Government of India, is in the habit of conducting the foreign affairs of the Sheikh of Sharga.

You should further add that the German Embassy in London are in communication with His Majesty's Government on the subject.

[956] No. 39.

Note communicated by Russian Embassy, January 9, 1908.

D'APRÈS un télégramme du Vice-Consul de Russie à Ourmiah, le Commissaire Turc à la Commission de Délimitation à la frontière Turco-Persane a proposé à la première entrevue des Commissaires la ville de Diman comme siège de la Commission.

Le Commissaire Persan ayant instantanément demandé que ce fût à Ourmiah, le Commissaire Turc a promis d'en référer à la Porte et d'appuyer de son côté cette demande.

La préférence du Commissaire Persan s'explique par la présence à Ourmiah des Consuls Russe et Anglais, dont la médiation ne pourrait manquer d'exercer une grande influence sur la marche des négociations et qui ne sauraient se transporter dans une autre localité sans donner lieu à des commentaires.

L'Ambassadeur de Russie à Constantinople a été chargé de s'entendre avec son collègue d'Angleterre afin de soutenir la proposition Persane auprès de la Sublime Porte.

[908] No. 40.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)

(No. 7.)
Sir, *St. Petersburg, January 6, 1908.*

I INFORMED M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's Government agreed that, in case of need, the Shah might be conducted to the frontier by a combined British and Russian escort; and I expressed the hope that he would now be in a position to send instructions to M. de Hartwig similar to those with which Mr. Marling had been

furnished. I beg leave to transmit copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky, stating that the necessary instructions have been telegraphed to M. de Hartwig.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 40.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

*Saint-Petersbourg, le 23 Décembre, 1907
(5 Janvier, 1908).*

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

EN réponse à votre aimable lettre d'hier, je m'empresse de vous faire savoir que je viens d'envoyer par télégraphe à M. de Hartwig des instructions analogues à celles dont Sir E. Grey avait muni Mr. Marling, et dont vous avez eu l'extrême obligeance de me communiquer un résumé le 13 (25) Décembre courant, mais en y introduisant les modifications convenues entre les Cabinets de Londres et de Saint-Petersbourg, c'est-à-dire, en invitant notre Ministre à accorder à Sa Majesté le Schah en cas de nécessité la sauvegarde des escortes combinées Anglaise et Russe, et à lui assurer, pour le cas où il devrait quitter le pays, la protection des deux escortes combinées jusqu'à la frontière.

J'espère que Mr. Marling a déjà été avisé des modifications à introduire dans ses instructions.

Votre, &c.
(Signé) ISWOLSKY.

[1004] No. 41.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)

(No. 7.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 10, 1908.*

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. See your telegram No. 8 of the 9th instant. Four days ago the Grand Vizier asked me which would be the best meeting place for the Commission. I said I considered it would be best to let the Commissioners decide the point for themselves, and refused, on that ground, to express an opinion. My Russian colleague has now requested that they should meet at Urmia, and, at his request, I yesterday supported his recommendation.

[1006] No. 42.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)

(No. 12.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 10, 1908.*

GERMAN, Turkish, and Austrian Dragomans yesterday went to congratulate Shah on the anniversary of his coronation. A long communication, dealing with the political situation, from Austrian Minister was read out by his Dragoman. The step was taken at the instigation of German Legation, and is an innovation.

Pique at the insignificant rôle he is condemned to play in Persian politics, and perhaps also personal animosity against M. de Hartwig, have contributed to influence Austrian Minister.

[1011] No. 43.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 10.)

(No. 13.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 10, 1908.*

ATTACK on Turks at Merivan.
Your telegram No. 2 of the 1st instant.

His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah telegraphs as follows:—

"Information correct, but it is doubtful whether a gun was captured. Version officially given out is that Persians attacked advancing Turks instead of, as elsewhere,

going to welcome them and surrender voluntarily, which is what the Turks thought they were doing. Reports are to effect that Turks are trying to bribe Persian tribes, and are stirring up Turkish tribes. Governor proposes to proceed shortly to frontier.

"To-day Turkish Consul-General left suddenly for Bagdad. On the 2nd instant Mollah Mehdi arrived with credentials from high priests of Kerbala. He was welcomed by a large crowd kissing his feet."

Persian Government are being warned of danger of giving provocation to Turks.

[898] No. 44.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 7.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, January 10, 1908.*

PERSIAN finance.

You may act in concert with your Russian colleague in regard to M. Bizot's appointment.

See yesterday's telegram No. 6 from St. Petersburg.

[1172] No. 45.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 11.)

(No. 9.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 11, 1908.*

FOLLOWING telegram received from Mr. Wratislaw, at Urmia to-day, dated the 9th instant:—

(No. 2.)
The Governor-General of Azerbaijan who is now at Saujboulak, telegraphs to the Persian Commissioner that he is well received and meets with little opposition, but that he is surprised to find that many Persian subjects claim Turkish nationality.

The Turkish Commissioner came to Urmia yesterday to feed (*sic*) with the Persian Commissioner, but returned to Balu. He called on me, and I tried to find out what his views were as regards the meeting place of the Commission, but his answers were evasive. He said that he thought the question could be settled by friendly conversation and perhaps mutual concessions, and that formal negotiations and the exchange of written Memoranda, as the Persians desired, were unnecessary. I said that I did not agree with him. He seems to be wasting time on purpose, perhaps in order to allow time for the other Commissioners to arrive.

The Persian Commissioner is trying to induce Taher Pasha to put the Turkish contentions on paper, but the latter's answers are vague and evasive.

Taher Pasha told me that many villagers had applied to him for Turkish protection, but that he had virtuously rejected their applications.

[1253] No. 46.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 11.)

(No. 11.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, January 11, 1908.*

I HAVE received the following telegram No. 4 of the 10th instant, from Urmia:—

"Taher Pasha told me when I called on him to-day that he relied on my good offices to smooth away any difficulties which might arise. I found him much more accommodating than before. A house is being prepared for the Turkish Commission near the town, and he told me he would come to it when invited. He also said he was prepared to admit the extension of the inquiry to cover the whole frontier, and to accept the Persian view as to the method in which the negotiations should be conducted."

[1563]

F

Following is the reply which I have sent him to-day :—

"(No. 2.)

"The Grand Vizier told me, in reply to my representations, that he had instructed the Turkish Commissioner twice within the last week to come to an agreement with his Persian colleague as to the meeting place of the Commission, and to do his best to solve the frontier question satisfactorily."

[1156]

No. 47.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 11.)

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 11, 1908.

PLEASE refer to my telegram No. 13 of the 10th instant.

His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah telegraphs as follows :—

"A collision on Persian territory is reported between Persian and Turkish tribes, and it is stated that Ottoman troops on frontier under Yussuf Pasha have been increased. Telegram from Governor of Kasr-i-Shirin says it is necessary to take steps immediately. On the 11th instant, Governor of Kermanshah, accompanied by a regiment and guns, starts for the frontier: it is reported that he will be joined by Kallior tribe. I propose, if you agree, to proceed immediately to Kasr-i-Shirin: I shall here be in touch all along the border, whereas I find it difficult to obtain early trustworthy information here. If necessary I can 'chapar' back to Kermanshah, but I think trouble here most unlikely. Local work at a standstill during absence of Governor.

"A man is being sent by me for news to Kurdistan."

Should Consul proceed as suggested?

[1171]

No. 48.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 11.)

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 11, 1908.

ON the night of the 7th, Feridoun, a prominent Parsee merchant, was murdered here.

There seems no doubt that crime had political motive, namely, to frighten Parsee community, from whom Popular party have received warm support.

I have received promise from Prime Minister that he will do his best to secure arrest of murderers.

[1156]

No. 49.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 11, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier dispute.

I approve the proposal that Consul at Kermanshah should go to Kasri Shirin, as mentioned in your telegram No. 14 of to-day.

He should try to secure that property of Oil Syndicate shall be properly protected.

[1255]

No. 50.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 12.)

(No. 3.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, January 11, 1908.

PERSIA. French Financial Adviser.

Your telegram No. 7 of yesterday.

The Russian Ambassador, who is confined to his room by illness, told me to-day that the Political Director at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, to whom he sent a

Secretary this morning, had stated that, as the Persian Government had accepted the title of Financial Counsellor, and other details at issue had been arranged, the Persian Minister in Paris would sign M. Bizot's contract this evening.

I have had confirmation of this from M. Louis, whom I saw this afternoon. As he stated that, on account of the difficulties of travelling at the present season, M. Bizot might perhaps not be able to go to Tehran immediately, I suggested that the difficulties were not insurmountable, and that it was important for him to reach his post without delay.

[1254]

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 12.)

(No. 12.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 12, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following telegram, No. 5, dated yesterday, received from Urumia :—

"According to a telegram sent from Soujboulak by the Governor-General of Azerbaijan, a thousand Kurds have got between him and Tabreez, having worked round his rear, and that this is the result of their having again been stirred up against him by the Turkish General Officer Commanding at Passova."

[1241]

No. 52.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 15.)

Sir,

Pera, January 8, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 169 of the 20th ultimo, reporting that orders had been sent to Van to prepare for mobilization at short notice, and to my despatch No. 791 of the 24th ultimo, reporting that efforts were being made to collect reserves and recruits at Mosul, I am now informed that orders have been sent to the military authorities of Trebizond to hold the Redifs of that military district in readiness on the alleged pretext that they may be required to repel an attack on the part of the Armenian revolutionaries on the Russian frontier. The Redifs of the Ghumushkhane district have also been called out for an unknown destination, while from Bitlis I learn that the Redifs have been warned to join the colours and that other minor military preparations are noticeable. Officers have been dispatched from Bitlis to ascertain how many of the Hamidieli irregulars are available for active service, and two battalions are believed to be about to leave Moush for Van. The Commandant of Bitlis has informed His Majesty's Vice-Consul that eleven battalions of the 8th Division, four battalions of which belong to the Bitlis Vilayet, have orders to proceed to the Persian frontier as soon as the necessary funds are forthcoming, their place being filled by Redifs. Lastly, I have received a report from His Majesty's Consuls in Syria that General Perteb Pasha, accompanied by a number of officers, has passed through Beirut and arrived at Aleppo on the 30th ultimo with 36 mountain and 6 field guns, 14,000 Mauser rifles, and 1,200 cases of ammunition destined for the 6th Army Corps at Bagdad. I have made inquiries at the Porte as to the meaning of these military preparations. In reply the Grand Vizier said that they were connected with the reorganization of the 6th Army Corps, which had been intrusted to General Perteb Pasha, a distinguished young soldier who was educated in Berlin and attached as Military Attaché to the Japanese Army, where Mr. Barclay tells me he saw considerable service. At the same time his Highness implied that in the uncertain condition of affairs in Persia they desired to be prepared for eventualities, although he again assured me that they had no aggressive intentions towards that country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[1309]

No. 53.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 13.)

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 13, 1908.

IT is belief of Persian Government that snow will render any military operations near Merivan impossible. They have sent orders enjoining the utmost prudence on frontier authorities.

It is denied by Minister for Foreign Affairs that Firman Firma (who is believed to have 3,000 men with him) is cut off, though 1,000 Kurds are threatening his communications with Tabreez.

[1443]

No. 54.

Treasury to Foreign Office.—(Received January 14.)

Sir,

Treasury Chambers, January 13, 1908.

I HAVE laid before the Lords (Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury Mr. Mallet's letter of the 3rd instant, stating that, in view of the disquieting situation at Shiraz, the Consular guard there has been, or will be, temporarily doubled by retaining the escort due for relief on the arrival of the reliefs.

I am to request you to inform Secretary Sir E. Grey that, on the understanding that this measure is considered necessary for the safety of the British Consulate, my Lords will not object to the charge to Imperial funds of one moiety of the total additional cost involved for a period not exceeding six months in all (*i.e.*, of half of 167l.).

I am, &c.

(Signed) G. H. MURRAY.

[1489]

No. 55.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 18.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 14, 1908.

SITUATION appears to be very precarious, and in the last few days general mistrust of the Shah has very much increased. His Majesty has been warned by Assad-ul-Mulk, head of the Kajar tribe, and Shoa-es-Sultaneh, that the Kajars themselves will unite with the nation in deposing him in favour of the Valiahd, unless he gives signal proof that he intends to co-operate with the Assembly.

I asked Prime Minister, whom I saw a few days ago, whether it would be possible for me to do anything to relieve the situation. His Excellency suggested my seeing Shah and warning him that to pursue his present course might have serious consequences. I asked for a private audience, and was received to-day, having previously consulted the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who warmly approved. I made a very frank exposition of the case to His Majesty, and warned him of the very grave danger which, in my opinion, threatened him. The Shah's answer was unsatisfactory and shuffling, though he professed to be an earnest friend of the Constitution.

Russian Minister has himself spoken to Shah in similar sense, and I took this step with his entire concurrence.

[449]

No. 56.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 15, 1908.

IN your Excellency's despatch No. 627 of the 23rd December, 1907, you state that M. Isvolsky informed you that he had instructed Count Benckendorff to solicit the views of His Majesty's Government as to an asylum being afforded to the Shah in some Legation in case his life was in imminent danger, and that he should be protected by British and Russian guards; that the choice of the Legation should

be left to the Diplomatic Body, and that he thought it would be well to make the question an international one.

The course to which I have agreed is not quite identical with the proposal put forward by M. Isvolsky, as I did not contemplate that the choice of the Legation in which the Shah would be received, in case of His Majesty seeking "bast," should be left to the Diplomatic Body, or the possibility of His Majesty taking refuge in any other Legation but the British or Russian.

It appears to me that M. Isvolsky's proposal would open the door to the result which both His Majesty's Government and the Russian Government particularly wish to prevent, *i.e.*, the internationalization of the Persian question, and for this reason I am strongly of opinion that it would be undesirable to adopt it.

I should be glad if your Excellency would take an opportunity in conversation of pointing this out to M. Isvolsky.

I am, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[465]

No. 57.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Hardinge.

(No. 6.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 15, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 8 of the 3rd instant, reporting the joint communication made to the Belgian Government by you and the Russian Minister on the subject of M. Priem's return to the Persian service.

You state that you informed M. Davignon that M. Priem was believed to be aiming at obtaining the post of Financial Adviser to the Shah.

I have to refer you to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 401 of the 21st ultimo, which reported that M. Priem was intriguing against M. Moruad, whose place he wished to obtain, whereas the only recent information which I have received with regard to his candidature for the post of Financial Adviser is that contained in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 406 of the 22nd instant, to the effect that the German Chargé d'Affaires is suggesting his appointment in that capacity.

His Majesty's Government have no complaint to make against M. Moruad, who is described by Mr. Marling, in his telegram No. 401, as fairly satisfactory and friendly.

You should take the opportunity of making it clear to M. Davignon, should his Excellency again refer to the subject, that the more immediate consideration is M. Priem's intrigue against M. Moruad, especially since the signature of the contract appointing a French Financial Adviser.

I am, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[1688]

No. 58.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 16.)

Sir,

India Office, January 15, 1908.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Mallet's letter dated the 8th instant, relative to the proposals of Messrs. Ellinger and Co. for the exploitation of the red oxide on the Island of Hormuz.

In reply, I am to state that Mr. Morley concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to give Messrs. Ellinger and Co. the assurances asked for, subject to the condition that they will only hold good so long as the enterprise remains British.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[1563]

G

[1706]

No. 59.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

AFFAIRS of Persia.

St. Petersburg, January 16, 1908.

I am informed by Minister for Foreign Affairs that it has been thought prudent to make a slight redistribution of the Russian forces near the Persian frontier, but that there are only 600 Cossacks in the rayon of Julfa, and it is not proposed to adopt any further precautionary measures. Exaggerated reports had apparently reached the Persian Government, and the above explanations had been given to the Persian Chargé d'Affaires here in answer to his inquiries.

[1702]

No. 60.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 16, 1908.

I HAVE just received following telegram, dated the 25th December, from Captain Lorimer, which I repeat with reference to my telegram No. 349 of the 19th November last:—

"On the 3rd December Manager of oil wells received telegram from Syndicate telling him to pay November instalment in full without deducting compensation claims. Syndicate hoped I would concur, saying that no excuse for quarrelling with us for the next few months would thus be left to the Khans.

"It would seem that Syndicate were unaware that instalment had been withheld.

"Khans' answer to my announcement of suspension reached me on the 22nd December. It is conciliatory in tone. No repudiation of responsibility (which I myself did not specifically mention) is implied, but Khans expostulate mildly, and make protestation of their past services and personal friendship.

"I shall propose to pay instalment only when a satisfactory adjustment is effected, in which question of compensation might be included, and shall offer to act as intermediary for Khans with the Legation. It would be possible to postpone mention of compensation, but fact should be brought home to Syndicate that it will thereby become still more difficult in future to recover this and subsequent claims. I have communicated with the Manager, Mr. Reynolds, in regard to the above."

I entirely agree in Captain Lorimer's view, which is also supported by Major Cox.

In the same way as they appealed against Lorimer to Legation, so do the Khans appear to have succeeded in communicating directly with Syndicate, in order to appeal against attitude of Legation. It would be most unfortunate if good result achieved were counteracted by independent action of Syndicate, for it seems clear, both from Captain Lorimer's Report and from indications here, that the Khans are coming to heel. Syndicate do not, I think, realize that with the Khans the money argument is the most material. We shall be deprived of our most effective weapon, and it will be far more difficult to get Lynch's claims settled if they pursue a policy of "damning the expense."

[1703]

No. 61.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 20.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier dispute.

I am informed by Minister for Foreign Affairs that Firman Firma is practically surrounded at Saonjboulak by Kurds, and that threatening letters have been received by him from Turkish Commander, summoning him to abstain from any military operation against the tribes. These tribes are the Gurek and Mamesh, and are both Persian.

[1705]

No. 62.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 16.)

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 16, 1908.

PLEASE refer to my telegram No. 18 of the 14th instant.

It is generally believed that the only object of a fresh show of conciliation which the Shah has made with Assembly is to carry him safely over two official receptions which it is customary to hold at this season; already indications are appearing of the total insincerity of his latest promises also. That this is the case is admitted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who regards the Shah's position as most precarious, though he is as a rule extremely reticent about the internal situation. Mushir-ed-Dowleh even hinted at the possibility of a Regency, and mentioned the name of Zil-es-Sultan in this connection.

[1793]

No. 63.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 17.)

(No. 13.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 17, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following from Mr. Wratislaw at Urmia, No. 5 of the 15th January:—

The steps taken for promoting the security of the district are proving efficacious; traffic has been resumed over the North Road, which appears to be safe. The rivalry between two parties of patrols has led to unimportant breaches of the peace in Urmia during the week; only one person has been killed, though there was a good deal of firing.

The Persian Commissioner has complained formally to Tahir Pasha concerning the action of the Turkish officer in command at Pasvah. Tahir Pasha has disavowed the latter, and has warned him both by letter and telegram to behave better in future.

The Turkish Commissioner is considered likely to arrive here in a day or two.

[1792]

No. 64.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 17.)

(No. 23.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 17, 1908.

PIRATES in Persian Gulf.

I much regret an oversight in my telegram No. 378 of the 14th December last, in which Major Cox's proposal should have been described as the destruction of Chief of Dashti's strongholds in the event of his failing to pay 15,000 rupees, which was to be distributed among the victims of the piracies as compensation.

Our assistance is declined by the Persian Government, who assert their willingness themselves to undertake destruction. I can correct mistake with Persian Government if you think desirable, but the more forcible measure, if effectively carried out, will, I submit, produce a better moral effect. As Governor of Gulf ports is a close friend of Chief, operation will certainly not be effective if left in the hands of Persian Government; its efficacy could, however, be assured were I to inform Persian Government that the operation will be watched by one of His Majesty's ships, and that instructions of officer in command are that, if work is not carried out to his satisfaction, he is to complete it.

[1959]

No. 65.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 18.)

(No. 24.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 18, 1908.

FRENCH Financial Adviser. Your telegram No. 16 of the 15th instant. His Majesty's Ambassador in Paris will, I presume, be consulted in regard to general instructions to be given to M. Bizot.

[1959]

No. 66.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 18.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 18, 1908.

FINANCIAL Adviser to Persian Government.

As regards a "lettre de service," see Mr. Marling's telegram No. 24, you should report the view held by Russian Government on the subject.

[1688]

No. 67.

Foreign Office to Messrs. Ellinger & Co.

Gentlemen,

Foreign Office, January 18, 1908.

I LAID before Secretary Sir E. Grey your letter of the 20th ultimo, stating that you propose to form a Limited Liability Company for the purpose of buying from the Moin-ut-Tujar all the red oxide on the Island of Hormuz.

In order to facilitate the subscription of the necessary funds, you ask that you may receive the following assurances from His Majesty's Government:—

1. That, so far as His Majesty Government are aware, the Concession to the Moin is in perpetuity. The Firman and Rescript confirming it have been seen at the British Legation at Tehran.

2. That, whatever happens as between the Moin and the Persian Government in respect of the future of the Concessions, His Majesty's Government will see that every possible effort is made to prevent interference with the rights secured to the Company by their Agreement with the Moin under his Concession, and to see that the rights and interests of the debenture-holders are respected.

3. That His Majesty's Government will unofficially do all they can in case of need to bring pressure to bear upon the Moin or his successors to carry out his obligations under this contract.

4. That the Legation at Tehran shall be desired to watch the interests of the debenture-holders generally, and shall permit the Company to employ Abbas Kuli Khan, C.M.G., Oriental Secretary to the British Legation at Tehran, and a British subject, to communicate from time to time to the trustees of the debenture-holders anything which may come to his knowledge affecting the person or property of the Moin in such a manner as to prevent or be likely to prevent him from carrying out his obligations to the Company.

5. That His Majesty's Consul at Bunder Abbas shall also be requested to watch the interests of the debenture-holders generally, and to give all possible assistance to the Company's agent at Bunder Abbas. The agent's duty will be to report to the Trustees of the debenture-holders from time to time the progress of mining by the Moin, and, in case of need, to engage men on their behalf to do the mining or otherwise to take such steps as may reasonably be required for the protection of their interests.

I am directed to inform you, in reply, that His Majesty's Government are prepared to give the above-mentioned assurances, subject to the condition that they will only hold good so long as the enterprise remains British, and provided that the character and nationality of the debenture-holders whose Trustees are to have either a majority on the Board, or a veto on the transfer of the ordinary shares, are established to the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government.

Sir E. Grey takes note of your statement that this reply will be considered as strictly private and confidential, and will only be shown to such persons as His Majesty's Government may approve.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[1985]

No. 68.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 272.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 21, 1907.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your despatch No. 175 of the 8th October last, transmitting copy of a letter to the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, which announces the renewal for three years of the annual subsidy granted to them by His Majesty's Government in respect of their steamer service on the Karun.

I notice from that letter that you, Sir, are of opinion "that it has now become a matter for serious consideration whether the enterprise in question will ever attain a position of financial equilibrium"; and I infer that, in the event of the enterprise failing to pay its way at the beginning of 1910, His Majesty's Government will not be averse from withdrawing the subsidy.

The past year has been one of great political strain, of governmental impotence, and one during which all foreign enterprises have been looked at askance by the constitutionalists in the capital, while their attitude has been reflected in that of their supporters in the provinces. These circumstances must necessarily have reacted unfavourably upon those enterprises.

It would be idle to prophesy how long the present state of affairs will last; but if the present situation in Tehran may be taken as offering any indication, it hardly seems probable that, within another one or even two years, the Government will have acquired any degree of the stability on which commercial undertakings of any magnitude largely depend for their successful operation.

It may therefore well be that, at the end of the period for which His Majesty's Government have renewed the subsidy, the Karun service will, through no fault of their initiators, have failed to attain financial independence.

Should this prove to be the case, and the enterprise still appear to be dependent on extraneous support for the continuance of its existence, I venture to urge upon His Majesty's Government the exercise of indulgence towards the Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company in view of the interests at stake, both commercial and political, which were fully dealt with in Sir C. Spring-Rice's despatch No. 153 of the 15th July last.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[1986]

No. 69.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 273.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 23, 1907.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 244 of the 7th November, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah to His Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Bushire respecting the visit of the Royal Indian mail-steamer "Comet" to Ahwaz.

I think it unlikely that the official protest of Sardar Arfa will produce any results at Tehran.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 69.

Consul-General Cox to Mr. Marling.

(No. 83. Confidential.)

Sir,

Bushire, November 17, 1907.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 125, dated the 15th October, 1907, sent to Bushire for dispatch to His Britannic Majesty's Consul, Mohammerah, regarding the

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deputation of Royal Indian mail-steamer "Comet" to Ahwaz, I have the honour to forward, for your information, a copy of Mr. McDouall's letter, No. 28, dated the 19th October, 1907, addressed to me on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major, British Resident in the
Persian Gulf, and His Britannic Majesty's
Consul-General for Fars, &c.

Inclosure 2 in No. 69.

Consul McDouall to Consul-General Cox.

(No. 28.) Mohammerah, October 19, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 15th instant, forwarding a telegram from His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires regarding the "Comet," and to inform you that I informed the Sardar Arfa in confidence of the proposed visit of the "Comet" to Ahwaz and the reasons thereof, as I considered necessary, or he would have considered that we were not treating him fairly. He pointed out that Ahwaz was a long distance (50 miles) from the Bakhtiari country, and he hoped that we would do nothing to injure him with the Persian Government in view of the newspaper articles accusing him of plotting with the British. He would do anything we wanted, but hoped that we would get orders sent to him, as the Karguzar was absent on leave, or tell him some reason which would clear him with his Government. I accordingly telegraphed through Bussorah to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to the above effect.

The Sardar Arfa also pointed out that the "Comet" carries a small machine-gun, so that she could not be called unarmed. The "Comet" arrived this morning, drawing 3 ft. 8 in. River-boats do not at this season draw over 3 feet when loaded. I had hoped that the Commander would have waited until the arrival of the "Malamir" to ascertain whether it was possible for him to reach Ahwaz, but after hearing the opinion of a former master of the "Malamir" that he could get within 4 miles of Bender Nasser he decided that he should endeavour to reach that point, considering his orders.

The Sardar Arfa is to write officially, on behalf of Karguzaret, protesting against "Comet's" action.

[1988] No. 70.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 275.)

Sir, Tehran, December 27, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I have received copy of a despatch, dated the 20th November last, addressed by His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz to Major Cox at Bushire, transmitting copies of reports on the state of the guards of the works of the Oil Syndicate and on the situation as regards the prosecution of the work on the Maidan-i-Munaftun side. Captain Lorimer adds that the Syndicate's claim for compensation from the Khans before these latest thefts amounted to 1,100 tomans on account of losses sustained since the end of March last.

Mr. Bradshaw reported that on the 11th November a large bellows for forge and a small portable forge were stolen. Mr. Reynolds added: "If this utter neglect in the matter of guarding the property of the Company continues, the drilling will be stopped by the removal or destruction of some essential part of the gear. . . . Already we have been robbed of part of our tackle, which we cannot do without, and which it will take me six weeks or even more to replace from Bombay."

In his letter of the 11th November, Mr. Bradshaw stated that the guards furnished for the last week had been as follows:—

- At Batwand, three men with one gun;
- At Drillers' Camp, two men with one gun;
- At Maidan-i-Munaftun, two men with no gun;

and added that the tribesmen were then coming down by hundreds and camping all round the works; that, though for the moment they were engaged in killing each other near the camp, they might quite possibly be encouraged to attack the workers by their practically unguarded state; and that it would be no matter for surprise if all the drillers one day turned up at Naseri and refused to work any longer, "unless a radical and speedy change be made in the farce that is being enacted here under the name of 'guards.'"

In view of the subsequent repudiation by the Khans of all responsibility in the matter (see my despatch No. 257 of the 30th November), which made the outlook even more unpromising, I think His Majesty's Government will be more than ever convinced of the necessity that existed for the dispatch of Indian guards to the scene of disorder.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[1990] No. 71.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 277.)

Sir, Tehran, December 30, 1907.

BARON VON RICHTHOFEN'S record last year while he was in charge of the German Legation here in the interim between the departure of Count Rex and the arrival of Herr Stemrich, though showing clearly enough his intention of pushing German interests here to the utmost, scarcely prepared anyone to expect the extraordinary unscrupulous activity he has displayed in the last fortnight, and I venture to think that a summary of his proceedings since his unexpected return to relieve Herr Stemrich on the latter's appointment to Wilhelmstrasse will not be without interest.

No sooner had Herr Stemrich left than Baron von Richthofen began to express his satisfaction at his chief's departure, as German interests in Persia could not, he said, fail to suffer in the hands of a representative deficient in energy and initiative; and hinted that he himself would not be found wanting in these qualities.

The first opportunity that offered itself was the question of M. Bizot's contract; the opposition of the Medjliss to the scheme was, no doubt, genuinely inspired by dislike of anything resembling foreign direction in Persian affairs, but, from time to time, there were signs of hostility to M. Bizot merely on the ground of his nationality; and suggestions were made that to appoint a Frenchman as Financial Adviser would be to place Persian finances entirely under Anglo-Russian control. In view of the intimacy existing between Baron von Richthofen and the President of the Assembly, there could be little doubt whose instigation was at work; and, indeed, on one occasion Naser-ul-Mulk gave me to understand that German influence was making itself felt.

In the early part of this month a German subject was appointed Norwegian Consul-General here, and Baron von Richthofen stated that the Mexican Government also had applied to Berlin to arrange for the nomination of a Mexican Consular-Resident here. Naturally, a German subject would be appointed, and the new Mexican Consul-General would be a convenient tool of the German Legation. Both he and the Norwegian Consul-General could, certainly, have no other *raison d'être*.

Of late there has been an epidemic of meetings of foreign Representatives to discuss questions of general interest, such, for instance, as that of the monopoly in gins, the postal service, and others. I have always disliked such meetings which produce little practical result, and though they may occasionally assist the Legations of the Powers whose interests are practically nil in Persia, they can only serve to limit our own freedom of action. Baron von Richthofen, however, took advantage of the growing custom to inspire the Turkish Ambassador to call a meeting on the 17th instant, at the acutest moment of the crisis, when a conflict between the hostile parties in Tehran seemed impending, to consider whether collective action by the Legations could not be taken to prevent bloodshed. M. de Hartwig and I agreed beforehand that to join in such collective action would not be in accordance with the spirit of our instructions, and that, moreover, we could not allow that the Turkish Ambassador should speak for us, even "in the name of humanity" while Ottoman troops were invading Persian territory, and inciting the tribes to plunder and excess near the frontier. The

incongruity of the position was too flagrant. At the meeting therefore we stated that until we knew whether the steps it was proposed to take were in accord with our instructions we could not promise to join in them. Seeing that collective action was thus barred, Baron von Richthofen at once said that he also was in the same position and must reserve his liberty of action. The discussion then turned on the withdrawal of the Legation guards furnished from the Cossack Brigade which had been effected on a direct order from the Shah and without any previous notice. Though the question affects neither the Russian nor British Legations whose Persian guards are supplied from other regiments, M. de Hartwig and I agreed to the decision to make a collective request to the Shah to restore the Cossack escorts, and the Turkish Ambassador, as doyen, was accordingly requested to obtain an audience of the Shah for the purpose. Shemsuddin Bey, however, absolutely declined to go alone, and in deference to his wishes it was agreed that the French and Austrian Ministers should accompany him. Later in the day the Austrian Minister called on the French Minister to invite him to join in a representation to the Shah on the part of all the Legations except the British and Russian. He said that there had been a good deal of dissatisfaction at the attitude of M. de Hartwig and myself and that Baron von Richthofen was ready to join in it. M. de La Martinière refused flatly, and hinted that the proposal was a most improper one after the decision taken by the general meeting. On repairing to the Turkish Embassy the following morning, before the proceeding to the palace, M. de La Martinière found Baron von Richthofen in eager conversation with Shemsuddin Bey and M. de Rosthorn, a conversation which was continued in whispers after his appearance. The French Minister, however, gathered that the German Chargé d'Affaires was urging that the Turkish Ambassador should take the opportunity of his audience to express his personal hope that His Majesty would strive to avert bloodshed. The manoeuvre was apparently successful for the Ambassador after discharging his mission to the Shah said that, speaking only for himself and on humanitarian grounds, he ventured to hope that a peaceful solution of the crisis would be found. It was of course at once circulated all over the town that the foreign Representatives had made a collective representation to the Shah in favour of the popular party. It is quite probable that the Ambassador has general instructions from Constantinople to shape his action in accordance with the advice of the German Legation.

Baron von Richthofen's intimacy with the President of the Assembly is a matter of public notoriety. He himself told me that he had offered the hospitality of the German Legation to Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh, and asked me what was my attitude towards "bastis." I said that I would discourage it as I had hitherto done in every possible way, that nothing would induce me to admit any refugees unless I was convinced that they were in imminent peril of their lives, or to allow the Legation to be made use of in any manner in questions of internal politics; and that if any individual took sanctuary with me I should take every care to prevent his communicating with his partisans outside the Legation. I added that it seemed natural enough that the Persian Minister in Berlin should look to the German Legation for protection, but of course he, Baron von Richthofen, would take the same precautions as myself. My German colleague then said that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh was already at the German Legation and would stay to dinner.

This conversation took place on the 16th, the day when the prospects of the popular party looked particularly gloomy, and it was freely rumoured that the Shah would attempt to seize the President.

The fact that Baron von Richthofen has been constantly at the Assembly is in itself not proof of anything more than indiscretion; but his presence at a secret committee meeting in the House, which is admitted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and his boasts that he had given advice in the organization of the defence of the Baharistan and Mosque, are more than significant.

Having failed to procure international intervention, Baron von Richthofen determined at all events to do what he could to counteract the joint action of the Russian and British Legations, and to let the world know that Germany stood on the same footing and had equal interests with the two neighbouring Powers. Accordingly, no sooner did he hear of the audience which M. de Hartwig and I had had of the Shah than he himself hastened to the Palace and, without giving any notice, so it is said, demanded to be conducted to the Shah's presence. His Imperial Majesty consented to receive him, and Baron von Richthofen proceeded to offer his felicitations on the reconciliation which had been effected "without foreign assistance." As the discussions between the Shah and the Medjliss were still continuing, congratulation at the moment was infelicitous.

He then set himself to prevent the Assembly from receiving from M. de Hartwig and myself the assurances which we had received from the Shah of His Majesty's benevolent attitude towards the Constitutional régime. His influence with the President of the Assembly made it easy for him to instil suspicions of our motives by suggesting that, in accepting a guarantee of the stability of parliamentary institutions from Great Britain and Russia, the Persian people would be placing themselves irretrievably under the tutelage of those Powers. His machinations were so far successful that it was seriously proposed to M. de Hartwig and myself by Mushir-ed-Dowleh that the Shah should take his oath on the Koran to the Assembly before all the foreign Representatives, who would be invited to sign their names as witnesses. The idea was, however, discarded as soon as it was known that most of the Legations would decline to accept such an invitation. The effort was not, however, fruitless, for the Minister for Foreign Affairs has intimated that the Assembly would be disinclined to accept anything more than a statement of the assurances we obtained from the Shah, and an expression of opinion that we believe His Majesty will abide by his pledges.

In this particular instance Baron von Richthofen's interference has been particularly mischievous. The effect of the interview which M. de Hartwig and I had with the Shah had produced a very marked pacificatory effect on public opinion here, and I have little doubt that, had our action been carried to immediate completion by the verbal communication which we proposed to make to the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, we should have succeeded in calming the popular outcry against the Shah, and that the situation would not have reached the critical stage it subsequently attained.

Of Baron von Richthofen's attempt to thwart the appointment of M. Bizot as Financial Adviser, and to obtain the post for M. Priem, I had the honour to inform you in my telegram No. 406 of the 22nd December. The motives underlying it are so obvious that I need not do more here than recall the fact.

His attempt, however, to induce the Dutch Minister to hand over Saad-ed-Dowleh was so impudent that it merits a brief account. Baron von Richthofen, on calling at the Legation early on the morning of the 26th, found that M. de Sturler was out, and sent up a note to ask Mme. de Sturler if she would receive him as he had most urgent and important business. When she appeared he told her that the Minister's action in harbouring Saad-ed-Dowleh was most incorrect and might cost him his appointment; that the two Dutch retail shops here would be boycotted, that there was already a formidable popular outcry against the Dutch Legation, and that he had been deputed by the President of the Assembly to demand that Saad-ed-Dowleh should be delivered up immediately. Mme. de Sturler was naturally much agitated by this unedifying exhibition of German diplomatic methods. The Minister, however, returned before it was over, and though Baron von Richthofen's attempts at intimidation then became somewhat less aggressive, they none the less amounted to threats. He spoke, too, in the most open way about his own conduct here. He said in so many words that his aim was to bring about a "Morocco" question in Persia, and that he had instructions for what he was doing; it should not be difficult, as the Anglo-Russian accord in Persian matters was a hollow pretence, and he knew that I was secretly supporting the popular party here, while ostensibly acting in concert with the Russian Minister. This absurd assertion, as well as the report which he has sent to Berlin that the joint action of the two Legations has been taken in order to obtain privileges prejudicial to other Powers, are of course mere fabrications.

From a telegram which M. de Hartwig has received from St. Petersburg it appears likely that the representations made in Berlin by Count Osten Sacken have resulted in a strong admonition to Baron von Richthofen to restrain his activity, and this appears to be confirmed by the prospect that he will leave Tehran early in the spring, in fact as soon as Count Quadt can arrive.

It is difficult to believe, after the repeated declarations of the German Government, that Germany had no political interests in Persia, and that her sole object is the development of her commerce and trade, that Baron von Richthofen had authority from Berlin for the course he has adopted here. Both M. de Hartwig and the French Minister, however, think that it is not by any means impossible. Be that as it may, Baron von Richthofen has unquestionably played the part of "agent provocateur" with great resolution, if perhaps clumsily, and though both the Russian Minister and I have endeavoured to impress on the Persian Government that German interference is rarely disinterested, he has succeeded in getting the influence and importance of Germany talked of in a country where ten years ago her name even was barely known, and in inspiring the belief that if Great Britain and Russia are not so accommodating

as every Persian thinks he has a right to expect, recourse can always be had to another Power that cannot be suspected of designs of territorial aggrandisement.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[1991]

No. 72.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 278.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 30, 1907.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 398 of the 19th instant, I have the honour to lay before you an account of my relations with the Russian Minister from the receipt on the 17th December of your telegram No. 197 of the 16th instant informing me that His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg had been instructed to invite the Russian Government to give instructions to M. de Hartwig to act in concert with myself, down to the 22nd, since when, thanks in very great measure to the good offices of the French Minister, M. de Hartwig has, to the best of my knowledge, acted in accordance with the spirit of his instructions.

The position of affairs in Tehran on the 15th seemed serious and even critical. The popular party had been much alarmed at the action of the Shah in the cases of Nasr-ul-Mulk and Ala-ed-Dowleh, which they looked on as a direct attack on the Medjliss and constitutional régime, while the importation of the roughs from the Imperial stud-farms at Weramin and elsewhere proved to them that His Majesty was prepared if necessary to use force. They were further excited by the rumours that a Cabinet was in process of formation of which the guiding spirits were to be Saad-ed-Dowleh and Amir Bahadur Jang, the most detested and feared of the Shah's supporters. Large numbers of constitutionalists armed by the Anjumens were collected in the garden of the Baharistan and in the courtyards of the adjoining Sipah Salar Mosque, ready to defend the Assembly sitting in the former in case of assault, while the Shah's partisans, whose numbers are said to have reached as high as 1,500, backed as was believed by the presence of the Cossack Brigade, held possession of Cannon Square, and were showing every symptom of wishing to provoke a quarrel. There were in fact two armed camps in the town, the one apparently only restrained from attack by the Shah's irresolution, and the other standing strictly on the defensive out of conviction that any aggressive movement on their part would give the "Russian" Cossack Brigade the pretext for action. The only element which seemed to make for peace was the ingrained aversion of the Persian from fighting.

On the receipt of your telegram, therefore, I called on M. de Hartwig and suggested that we should take some step to calm the agitation of the people, which might easily become dangerous to Europeans. I thought that any joint action at that moment would have a salutary effect, and that, as the Shah had first taken aggressive action, we might advise him to give some overt proof of his profession that he had no intentions hostile to the constitutional régime. While we were talking M. de Hartwig received his instructions from St. Petersburg. He said at once that he would gladly co-operate with me in the interests of peace, but he thought that I took too serious a view of the position. The Shah had no designs against the Assembly, but only against the political societies which stirred up sedition against him; I could be quite sure that His Majesty had the situation well in hand, and action at the moment was, he thought, quite uncalled for. I said that the Assembly felt that its real force lay in the support of the Anjumens, which were only the expression of public opinion, and that the popular leaders believed that an attack on the Anjumens was an attack on constitutional government. It was this fear of a *coup d'Etat* by the Shah which brought together the armed crowds at the Baharistan and Mosque. It would probably not take much at this moment to allay their apprehension of the Shah's designs; but if the tension continued the situation might get beyond control. I should like to see the Shah's "lambs" withdrawn. To this M. de Hartwig declined to listen, and said it would give us the appearance of taking the part of the Assembly. I observed that as the Shah had taken the first step in the direction of aggression he ought equally to be the first to recede; if he did so the people would disperse. M. de Hartwig, however, maintained his refusal, and I then suggested as a milder step that we might warn the Shah of the danger of appointing such a Cabinet as I knew for a fact had been openly talked of at the Palace that morning. To this M. de Hartwig at length agreed, and we arranged that the Oriental Secretaries of

the two Legations should go to the Palace to inform the Shah that in our opinion the inclusion of Saad-ed-Dowleh and Amir Bahadur Jang in the Cabinet would excite popular feeling to a dangerous extent. The Russian Minister was, however, averse from our dragomans going together, as it would have the air of a joint demonstration against the Shah, and rather than abandon all attempt to calm the prevailing apprehension I agreed to their going separately.

I left the Russian Legation with the feeling that M. de Hartwig was confident that victory lay with the Court party, and that by stalling off joint action by the Legations he would contribute to the result.

Mr. Churchill went to the Palace the same evening; he was unable to see the Shah, who was receiving a deputation from the Assembly, but he left the message in quarters whence it was sure to reach His Majesty. M. de Hartwig and his Oriental Secretary have both told me that the latter had the same experience, but I have some reason to doubt whether M. Batiousschkow even went to the Palace.

On Wednesday, the 18th, after the meeting of the "Chefs de Mission," reported in another despatch, M. de Hartwig called on me and pointed out the evident intentions of Baron von Richthofen to play a prominent part in the present conjuncture, even if he could not bring about collective intervention by the Missions. I said that the best way to prevent it was by taking joint action ourselves, and urged that we should make representations to the Shah that the security of foreigners in the town was menaced by the presence of the men whom he had collected to intimidate the Anjumens. With evident reluctance M. de Hartwig agreed, and it was most distinctly arranged between us that M. Batiousschkow and Mr. Churchill should make a joint representation at the Palace on our behalf for the removal of these men. I urged that a *démarche* by ourselves in person would produce much more impression both on the Shah and on public opinion, but to this I could not get M. de Hartwig to assent. The Russian Minister was anxious to preserve the appearance of harmony between the two Legations, but he was equally anxious that such co-operation should not be detrimental to Russian influence over the Shah nor weaken the Shah in his struggle with the Assembly.

The result of the audience of M. Batiousschkow and Mr. Churchill I have already had the honour to report to you in my telegram No. 398 of the 19th instant, and I need not repeat it here. It is sufficient to say that its effect was to encourage the Shah against the popular party.

In the afternoon I called at the Russian Legation and pointed this out to M. de Hartwig. He declined to admit that Mr. Churchill's account was correct, and proceeded to read me M. Batiousschkow's written report, which entirely corroborated Mr. Churchill's account. M. de Hartwig was unfortunately receiving the numerous callers who came to offer congratulations on the Czar's fête-day, and connected conversation was impossible, but from what discussion took place I was more than ever convinced that, while M. de Hartwig wished sincerely to avert any interference but our own, he was quite ready to run what he believed to be but a small risk of disturbances in Tehran rather than take any steps which could weaken the Shah's position, and that he was convinced that the Assembly and popular party would suffer defeat. If M. de Hartwig is better acquainted with what passes at the Palace than myself, I am probably supplied with more accurate means of judging of the feeling of the popular party, and at the moment I could detect no sign of discouragement among them, but rather the reverse. When, therefore, the first news of the declaration of the Tabreez Anjumen that the Shah must be deposed arrived late in the afternoon, it seemed to me quite possible that the constitutionalists in Tehran might be moved to take the offensive themselves, and that it was urgently imperative, for the preservation of order, to take some steps to prevent it. I therefore decided to invoke the assistance of the French Minister, and, calling on him the following morning, laid the situation confidentially and frankly before him.

M. de La Martinière at once promised me his co-operation. He thought that my appreciation of the Russian Minister's attitude was perfectly correct, and it was obvious that so long as the principle of co-operation between the two Legations was observed a refusal on the part of M. de Hartwig to take action must condemn me to inactivity. The Russian Minister held all the trump cards, and was making the best of them according to his lights. It was unfortunate that the present crisis had followed so closely on the publication of the Anglo-Russian Agreement that Great Britain had not had time to efface the unfortunate impression it had produced here. He was as seriously concerned as myself at the prospect of any serious divergence of views or actions between the two Legations being manifested, as it would give opportunity for German

interference, and, if I wished it, he would try to induce the Russian Minister to take some overt action in concert with me which would prove that the Anglo-Russian accord was a reality. The gravity of the situation, moreover, made action imperative. M. de La Martinière accordingly had a long interview with his Russian colleague, with the result, to which probably the news of the widespread excitement in the provinces also contributed, that M. de Hartwig wrote to me proposing a meeting at the French Legation on the following afternoon.

In the earlier part of the discussion, the results of which I reported briefly in my telegram No. 404 of the same day, and which are recorded at greater length in the inclosed Memorandum drawn up by M. de La Martinière, the Russian Minister asserted his conviction that the Anjumens were discouraged, and that our projected interview with the Shah would achieve the desired results, i.e., (1) the pacification of the popular agitation against His Majesty, by the assurance of the moral obligation assumed by the two Legations to see that the Shah's pledges would be observed, and (2) of averting the internationalization of Persian affairs for which the German Chargé d'Affaires was working with so much activity. I said that I did not believe that the popular party had lost confidence; they had, it was true, consented to disperse their armed supporters on the previous day, but this was intended to show that they had no aggressive intentions, and that the presence of the Shah's "lambs" to protect him was unnecessary. Nor was it conceivable that after the assurances of support that had come in from the provinces, and especially from Tabreez, they should have lost heart. Henceforth M. de Hartwig no longer concealed his anxiety as to the danger in which the Shah was placed, and it seemed that he realized that to continue the policy he had hitherto pursued might imperil His Majesty's throne, if not his life also. He was still, however, anxious, so far as was safe, to do nothing which could have the appearance of action against the Shah, and suggested that our first step should be the warning to Zil-es-Sultan. To this I demurred warmly on the ground that the danger point was not the attitude of the Assembly, which had shown the most commendable self-restraint, but the aggressive inclinations of the Shah; if the warning to the Zil-es-Sultan against intriguing with the popular party against the Shah preceded our audience with His Majesty we should appear to be taking the Shah's part, which would only add to the general disquietude, while our object was to allay it. M. de La Martinière supported this view, and it was decided that we should ask for an audience at 11 o'clock the next morning, and call on Zil-es-Sultan in the afternoon. The programme thus settled was carried out.

I have said little of the part taken by M. de La Martinière in this discussion, but it is only his due that I should say that I am convinced that without his tact and sagacity M. de Hartwig could not have been brought, except after perilous delay, to see the necessity of cordial and open co-operation with this Legation.

Since then I have on more than one occasion received intimations that M. de Hartwig is not acting loyally, but investigation has shown them to be groundless, and I believe that he has been consistently acting in the spirit of his instructions.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[1993]

No. 73.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 280.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 31, 1907.

THE position of affairs on the Turco-Persian frontier inspires the Persian Government with the gravest misgivings.

From the reports received from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw and from other sources, there can be no doubt that the Turks are pursuing an actively aggressive policy, both by the direct occupation of Persian territory, and also by inciting the tribes, both Sunni and Shia, on this side of the frontier to commit raids and create disorder, and by inducing them, by suasion or menace, to petition for Ottoman nationality, the object being in both cases to give a pretext for a further advance of the Ottoman troops.

The Persian Government is in a dilemma: if they send such forces as they can collect to maintain the tribes in order, the Sultan makes it an excuse for preparations for invasion; while, if they take no action, the Turks at once assert the necessity of doing so themselves.

The Persian Government, however, feel that the danger of widespread disorder among their own tribes is such as to demand some steps. Firman Firma's action will be confined to that task in the neighbourhood of Saoujboulak, beyond which, I am assured, he will not advance in a westerly direction. He may be able to collect as many as 2,500 men, mostly irregular cavalry, which cannot possibly be considered as a menace to Turkey.

In northern Azerbaijan complete anarchy prevails. The road from Tabreez to Julfa is infested with marauding Kurds, and the Russian Consular post has been held up two or three times, and on one occasion a courier was killed.

The Persian Government is obsessed with the belief that Russia is only seeking for an opportunity to intervene, and such action as they are taking is merely for the restoration of a degree of order, so as to avert such a contingency.

I feel confident that the Russian Minister will deprecate any intervention till the condition of the country makes it imperative for the protection of Russian subjects.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[1995]

No. 74.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 282.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 31, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual Monthly Summary of Events in Persia for the last four weeks. The proceedings of the National Assembly have been included in the Monthly Summary, as they were mainly connected with the Shah's attempted *coup d'Etat*, which has been fully dealt with in a separate despatch.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 74.

Monthly Summary of Events in Persia for the last Four Weeks.

Tehran.

The National Assembly.

IT will be remembered that the hostility of the Shah and his agents was keenly felt by the Assembly during November, when heated debates took place on the subject, as reported in the last summary of the proceedings of the Assembly. This crisis, which occurred on the 15th December, and which forms the subject of a separate despatch, was precipitated by the insistence of the Assembly on the expulsion of Saad-ed-Dowleh and Amir Behadur Jang, the Shah's principal reactionary agents. The victory gained by the Assembly was in a great measure due to the armed support of the "Enjumens," or local Committees. The proceedings of the House, whose sittings have been uninterrupted, do not justify a separate Report. They were mainly devoted to the Shah's attempted *coup d'Etat*. The new Cabinet, which contains only three new members, i.e., Nizam-es-Sultaneh, in the place of Naser-ul-Mulk; Zafar-es-Sultaneh, as Minister for War; and Kayem Makam, as Minister of Commerce and Customs, was eventually accepted by the House, but at the sitting of the 31st December they were subjected to a most undignified cross-examination by the Deputies on the subject of recent events. The position of the House is probably stronger than ever at the present moment.

The Press.

No newspapers appeared for about a week during the crisis, but are now reappearing. During the interval numerous printed leaflets appeared, denouncing the Shah and the reactionaries. One of these sheets purports to give a list of the Crown jewels pawned at the Russian Bank for 60,000 tomans, with which, it states, the Shah paid his band of roughs. The "Habl-ul-Matin," after giving a minute account of the principal events of the last fortnight, without, however, directly attributing the riots

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to the Shah, indulged in renewed hostile comments on the Anglo-Russian Agreement. This daily paper, which continues to be widely read, has lately published a severe attack on the "Times" Persian correspondent, Mirza Abdul Hussein Khan, Wahid-ul-Mulk, lately attached to Professor Browne at Cambridge, who is described as having misrepresented the situation here in his letters to the "Times."

General.

Naser-ul-Mulk, who was imprisoned at the Palace the 15th December and released the same evening, in consequence of the intervention of His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires on his behalf, left Tehran for Resht the following day. He is now at Vienna.

Saad-ed-Dowleh took refuge at the Dutch Legation, the 24th December, and is still there.

Sahib Ekhtiar (*Vizir Mahsoos*) left Tehran for Shiraz to take up the post of Governor-General on the 30th December.

Ala-ul-Mulk has been appointed Governor of Kerman.

The *Cossack Brigade* is now under the orders of the Minister for War, and not, as formerly, under the direct orders of the Shah.

Amir Behadur Jung is still performing his duties as Commander of the Shah's Body-guard, but this force is now under the orders of the Minister for War.

New Cabinet.

Finance Minister and President	..	..	Nizam-es-Sultaneh.
Minister for Foreign Affairs	..	..	Mushir-ed-Dowleh.
Minister of War	..	..	Zafar-es-Sultaneh.
Minister of Justice	..	..	Mukhber-es-Sultaneh.
Minister of Mines and Public Works	..	..	Sani-ed-Dowleh.
Minister of Commerce and Customs	..	..	Kayem Makam.
Minister of Interior	..	..	Assef-ed-Dowleh.

G. P. Churchill, Oriental Secretary.

Tabreez.

1. With reference to the incident at the Russian school, it appears that the Russian Consul-General harangued the crowd, and ended by ordering his Cossacks to charge magazines, which caused the immediate dispersal of the crowd. None of the culprits were caught, but the house of the ringleader was pulled down by Government officials. The local press wrote bitterly on the subject, and demanded the removal of the Russian Consul-General.

2. On more than one occasion recently armed men have endeavoured to force their way into the Russian Consulate-General, one of whom admitted that his purpose was to kill the Russian Consul-General.

3. In view of the generally disturbed situation at Tabreez, and the Russian Consul-General's request for further protection, the Russian Government have decided to send an extra guard of twenty-five Cossacks, and to keep a force of 400 men ready on the frontier.

4. The Governor-General left in the middle of December for Soujboulak in connection with the reported Kurdish insurrection.

5. A telegram, received from Tehran the 2nd January, announces the arrival at Tabreez of twenty-five Cossacks, increasing the Russian guard to fifty men.

Urmia.

The revolutionaries having made the administration of the town impossible by arrogating to themselves judicial and administrative functions, the Governor on the 24th November appealed to the Governor-General and the Tabreez Assembly. He was authorized to eject the leader of the revolutionaries from Urmia. This was done on the 26th November, but the next day the Governor was himself compelled to leave the town, which remained without an Administration. No disorders have, however, yet occurred.

Resht.

Resht was thrown into a state of great excitement on the 18th December by reports that the whole of the National Assembly had been massacred and that Russian troops had crossed the frontier at Astara. Next day the Governor with the priests, Notables, and a crowd of people, assembled in the telegraph office, and remained there until, on the 23rd December, a telegram from Tehran announced that peace once more prevailed. A proposal to send 10,000 men from Ghilan to Tehran to support the Assembly resulted in some forty men being paraded in uniform.

Astrabad.

1. The Turcomans are said to have sounded the Russian Commissioner at Gunbad-i-Kabus as to whether he would object to the Persian Commissioner there being robbed. The Russian Commissioner is said to have left the matter to their discretion.

2. Fifteen captives have been ransomed from a Turcoman Chief for 200 tomans. At a meeting of local officials and Turcoman Chiefs, the latter denied having raided, and undertook not to raid in the future. The local traders have all taken oath to kill all the local officials if the captives and property taken in the recent raids are not recovered.

3. Sepahdar, the new Governor, reached his post on the 1st December. Fifteen hundred Attabai Turcomans, who had promised him to return to their usual camps, were, on the 16th December, within 25 miles of Astrabad. They announced that they would not recognize a Governor appointed by the National Assembly. This seems to confirm the report that the Shah instigated their raids.

Meshed.

1. M. de Klemme left Meshed for Tehran early in November, having been granted five months' leave. M. de Giers informed Major Sykes that M. de Klemme will probably be appointed to a high post in the Russian Foreign Office.

2. It is reported, on good authority, that the Russians have doubled their frontier guards and have posted two guns near Archingan.

3. The Russian Consul-General has demanded the dismissal of the Governor-General's Attaché as being hostile to Russian interests.

4. The local Assembly have telegraphed to Tehran that, in view of the pressing necessity for funds in Khorassan for mobilizing troops, no revenue will in future be sent to the capital.

5. Small additional bodies of troops were dispatched to Kuchan and Sahzevar, but they had no responsible leader, and desertions were common. Of 3,000 cartridges sent to Kuchan by parcels post 2,700 were lost on the way.

6. Forty-two heads and five Goklan Turcoman prisoners were brought into Meshed in triumph. Two prisoners were killed at Kuchan and one at Meshed by the mob.

7. The arrival near Meshed of three carts, said to contain arms and ammunition for the Russian Consul-General, created some excitement. Spies were sent out but failed to locate the carts, which had disappeared. Five carts had arrived previously, part of the contents of which was sent to Turbat and Seistan.

8. The five Turks referred to in last Summary reached Herat, and were treated with much distinction. They were the guests of the Governor of Herat. They know no Persian, and wild rumours were current as to their mission. They assisted at the inspection of 200 soldiers who were being drilled by one of the Ameer's instructors, and declared the drill to be quite obsolete.

9. The local Assembly has prohibited the export of grain, and the Governor-General has compelled the Customs to withdraw notices they had posted sanctioning the export of wheat to Russia.

10. On the 22nd December the Popular party closed all Government offices, but allowed the British telegraph clerks to continue work. Next day the local Assembly took charge of the Arsenal, and at our Consul-General's request allowed the postal service to be resumed for foreign subjects. Both the Popular and Reactionary parties accepted our Consul-General's advice to avoid bloodshed and maintain order. The city remained quiet and Europeans were respected. There was much anxiety for the Meshed Representatives at the Tehran Assembly.

Turbat-i-Hayderi.

1. Five hundred infantry and 100 horsemen left for Meshed, for service against the Turcomans, on the 16th November, and were followed next day by 50 more horsemen from Khaf. Karez was ordered to send 200 horsemen to Astrabad.
2. Four Russian Cossacks arrived on the 20th November from Karez and left the same day for Seistan. A Russian telegraph signaller arrived on the 25th November.
3. Herr Kurt Jung, German Commercial Delegate, left on the 20th November, after a stay of some days, for Birjand and Kerman.
4. Our Karez agent reports that five men, said to have maps and drawing instruments with them, were stopped on the Afghan frontier pending orders from Cabul. They were Turkish subjects, but one was said to be a Belgian or Russian. They were later taken on to Herat in state, horses and camp furniture being provided for them. He also states that nearly 2,000 Turcoman horsemen are said to have arrived at Pul-i-Khatun. Captain Keyes is making inquiries about this.

Isfahan.

1. On the 22nd November, a disturbance occurred, ending in a fight between the students of a local college and certain supporters of the Aghas. The cause was the belief of the students that the college funds were being misappropriated. The Governor, being unable to restore order, advised the Aghas to compensate the students and to promise an inquiry into the administration of the funds. This was agreed to and order was restored.
2. A representative of Agha Nejefi called on His Majesty's Consul-General and denied that the Aghas had publicly ordered all native traders to close their accounts with Europeans. The denial was made in the presence of the Consular Mirza, who was also present when Agha Norullah issued his Decree from the pulpit. The fact remains that native traders dare not deal freely with Europeans as before.

Yezd.

1. The post from Yezd to Kerman was robbed on the 22nd November. The robbers are stated to have been Kashgai.
2. All the soldiers at Yezd, excepting four, have deserted and returned to Kerman. The Imperial Bank of Persia was able to get two of the four remaining men, but the British telegraph office remains without a guard. The town remains quiet in spite of there being no Governor.

Seistan and Kain.

1. The Karguzar was ordered by the Foreign Minister, by telegraph, to assist the Russian Consul in having the reeds cleared round the telegraph poles in the "naizar," and to comply with his wishes regarding the demolition of certain houses near the Consulate. He was also instructed to conduct himself in such a way that the Russian Consul should have no reason to complain. The houses were some days later demolished, and the reeds were cut at the expense of the Persian Government.
2. The revenue question remains unsettled. Large stocks of grain are lying in the villages, but no buyers can be found at the rates fixed. The British Consul has suggested the temporary removal of export and passport taxes, to encourage the export of grain to Baluchistan and India.
3. At Birjand a volunteer movement against foreigners, and with special antagonism to the Anglo-Russian Convention, has been started by certain priests. The British Consul has advised the Governor to discourage the movement.
4. The health of our troops at Robat is very bad, there being seventy cases of scurvy and forty men in hospital. The sickness appears to be due to the water. More stills are urgently required to allow of none but distilled water being drunk by the men.
5. An Afghan trader is reported to have brought eight rifles to Seistan from Quetta.

Kerman.

1. The Khans appointed by Sahib Ekhtiar to carry on the Administration until his arrival, finding it impossible to do so owing to the opposition of the Nazim,

resigned. The Governor then appointed Nosret-ul-Mamalek and Assef-i-Dafter to be Deputy Governors until his arrival. Haji Naib, however, is dictator of the town, and rides rough-shod over the Deputy Governors and the Assembly. Sahib Ekhtiar having been transferred to Shiraz as Governor-General of Fars, Ala-ul-Mulk has been appointed Governor.

2. His Majesty's Consul telegraphed in the last week in December that the Nazim and Haji Naib had concocted a plot against the British residents in Kerman. He added that they were acting hand in glove with the Russian Consul, that they were ruling the town by fear, and that their continued ascendancy was damaging to our prestige. They had control of all offices, and Major Ducat could not even post letters. On the 1st January Major Ducat, in answer for a request for details of the plot, telegraphed that on receipt of the Shah's telegram of the 16th December announcing his *coup d'Etat*, the Nazim called on the Consulate Attaché and asked whether the British Government would intervene. When told that they would not, he appeared distressed and talked of suicide. Next day numbers of old illuminated Bible texts were distributed in the Bazaar in Major Ducat's name, reports were spread that British troops had already landed and were going to take Kerman and force Christianity on the people, and that Major Ducat was issuing papers of protection. A Mollah was put up to preach against the Missionary Society. On the 23rd December a midnight meeting was held at which the question of an attack on British subjects was discussed. The plot was organized by the Nazim, Haji Naib, and Seyed Shahab. The Russian Consul's Mirza is their intimate friend. The Russian Consul has largely helped to place these men in their present commanding position by his recognition of them. The Russian Consul harps on British intervention in the South.

Kermanshah.

Zahir-ed-Dowleh, who suddenly left his post without orders, has arrived at Tehran, and there is still no Governor at Kermanshah. The town is, however, quiet. Mohammed Mehdi, the priest who was considered responsible for the riots which occurred there last summer when Salar-ed-Dowleh was in rebellion, and who fled to Kerbela, is now reported to be on his way back. The British and Russian Consuls consider that his return will probably bring about further trouble, and His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires has therefore made representations on the subject to the Foreign Minister.

Shiraz.

1. The situation continued disturbed during the last days of November and most of December. There was a good deal of firing, and the number of street assaults and robberies increased. Full particulars have now been received as to the assault on Mr. Grahame's servant, reported in last Summary. On the 10th December the manager of the Imperial Bank was deliberately fired upon, but fortunately not hit. Negotiations between the two factions have several times taken place, but without result. The Khabir-ed-Dowleh, nominally Deputy Governor of Fars, is without power or resources; such authority as exists lies in the hands of the Kavam's sons. Sahib Ekhtiar has been appointed Governor-General, and left Tehran on the 30th December for his post. Latest reports state that the situation is much calmer.
2. The Tehran relieved escort reached Shiraz on the 20th December, and is detained there pending the restoration of order.
3. Muleteers report that riflemen on the Bushire road take toll from all caravans. A caravan of Messrs. Ziegler's was held up by riflemen near Chenar Rahdar, and almost everything was taken. The stolen goods include a box of bar silver, a gun, and over 120/ worth of other property. Reports continue to be received of the damage done by tribesmen; in one case a group of villages is said to have been razed to the ground. The Baharloo tribesmen are said to be quite out of hand. There is a consensus of opinion that in the spring there will be considerable tribal trouble.

*Persian Gulf.**Bushire.*

1. The Governor having insisted on the election of a local Assembly, representatives have been elected respectively by the artisans, gentry, land-owners, sailors and ship chandlers, merchants, and clergy. The Assembly was formally inaugurated on the 22nd November.

2. On the 5th December the Governor left by mail steamer with 200 men to suppress the disturbances at Bunder Abbas. Before leaving he announced that all civil pensions had been abolished and military pensions reduced. He also stated that the Kavam-ul-Mulk was trying to get the Governorship of the Gulf ports in order to escape from Tehran. Both these statements on his part prove to be untrue.

3. The capture and disposal of the Dayyir pirates has been fully reported upon in telegrams.

Bunder Abbas.

1. With reference to previous entries in the Summary, there are now in all ten Russian Cossacks and one officer at Bunder Abbas.

2. The people of Bunder Abbas have been instructed to send a representative to the Council for the Persian Gulf at Bushire.

Ahwaz.

1. Lieutenant Wilson and twenty men, detailed as a guard for the oil-works at Batwand and Mamatain, reached Ahwaz during December. The second officer, Lieutenant Ranking, is now on his way there.

2. Telegraphic communication between Ahwaz and Borazjoon was restored early in December and subsequently again broken.

Mohammerah.

The local authorities have recommended the prohibition of the export of grain for two months until the prospects of the next crop can be estimated, but that grain already purchased should be allowed to be exported. Urgent representations are being made by the Legation on the subject.

C. B. STOKES, Major,
Military Attaché.

[1996]

No. 75.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 283. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 31, 1907.

WHEN I saw Nasr-ul-Mulk on the 13th instant he said that the relations of the Government with the Shah were again giving him some anxiety, but he gave me no reason to anticipate that a serious crisis was imminent.

On Saturday there was a great gathering at the Sipah Salar Mosque adjoining the Parliament buildings, where speeches of an inflammatory character were delivered by Malek-ul-Mutekallemin and other popular orators, denouncing the Shah as having sold himself to Russia, and demanding the removal and expulsion of Amir Bahadur Jang and Saad-ed-Dowleh. Speeches and sermons almost equally violent had, however, been pronounced before then without producing much result, and it was not till midday on Sunday that any news of impending trouble reached the Legation. I then heard that the Shah had collected a strong force made up of Amir Bahadur's "regiment," reinforced by the palace gholams, muleteers and camel-drivers, and had posted them in the Cannon Square ready to attack the Assembly, and that the Popular party were meditating taking "bast" *en masse* at the Legation. Inquiry showed at once that the first part of this information was correct, and I therefore caused the Legation gates to be closed and posted a gholam at each with orders that I was to be called if any attempt were made to enter the compound. No movement of the kind was, however, made.

The Mejlis sat all the morning, and an attempt was made to induce Ala-ed-Dowleh and Zil-es-Sultan, who both attended the sitting, to convey a message from the House to the Shah. Both, however, declined, the latter suggesting with grim humour that Naib-es-Saltaneh might be willing to undertake the mission.

Toward 3 o'clock Ala-ed-Dowleh, on a summons from the Shah, went to the Palace. His Majesty received him with ungovernable fury, striking him repeatedly on the head and abusing him in the foulest language for having dared to act with the Assembly, and

it is probable that only the fact that the Ferrash Bashi was not forthcoming saved the Ala-ed-Dowleh, the "strong man" of Persia, from the bastinado. After further indignities he was hurried off under escort, and condemned, with his brother Muin-ed-Dowleh, to exile at Kerbela. An eye-witness of the scene, which lasted but a few minutes, described the Shah to me as having behaved like a frenzied beast. At the Palace, where Colonel Liakhoff and another officer of the Cossack Brigade were present with a detachment of their troops, there was the wildest excitement, and the courtyards were crowded with armed men.

The treatment of Ala-ed-Dowleh produced a profound sensation at the Assembly, where, towards 5 o'clock, it was decided that the deputation, whose attendance the Shah had required for the next morning, should go at once to the Palace, while the House would remain sitting until they returned. The deputation, however, never left, and the members, on learning, presumably, of Nasr-ul-Mulk's arrest, dispersed hastily to their homes.

Meantime, the Shah had summoned the Ministers to the Palace, and had placed Nasr-ul-Mulk, the first arrival, under arrest. The news of the *coup* was brought me about 6.30 by his relative, Iftikher-ut-Tujjar, and a servant who had accompanied Nasr-ul-Mulk to the Palace, and who asserted that as he was led away his master had whispered, "Let the British Legation know I am to be killed by 10 o'clock." Both were labouring under deep emotion, and begged that I would send at once to the Palace to save Nasr-ul-Mulk's life. Knowing the state of mind in which the Shah had been a few hours previously, the Nasr-ul-Mulk seemed to be in very real danger, and I at once sent Mr. Churchill to the Palace to obtain assurances for his life, and to say that if they were not given at once I should come myself to demand them. I informed the Russian and French Ministers of the steps I was taking.

On reaching the Palace Mr. Churchill found that Nasr-ul-Mulk was confined in one room, while the rest of the Cabinet was assembled in another, practically under arrest also, in charge of Amir Bahadur Jang. The announcement of Mr. Churchill's mission came as a great relief to the Ministers, but was received with disquiet by their warders. After some little delay he was conducted to the Shah, whom he found walking up and down one of the courts of the Palace. His Majesty was in the highest spirits; he declared, of course, that he had no intention of injuring Nasr-ul-Mulk, who was free to depart wherever he pleased, or any of the Ministers, and kept repeating "they are frightened, they are frightened." Mr. Churchill returned to the room where the Ministers were sitting, and Nasr-ul-Mulk appeared shortly after. Subsequently a "destkhat" (autograph rescript) of the Shah was brought stating that His Majesty had no complaint against Nasr-ul-Mulk, and that, his resignation as Minister being accepted, he was free to go where he pleased. The whole body of Ministers then left the Palace, and Mr. Churchill sent a gholam to accompany Nasr-ul-Mulk to his house, which he reached about 7.30.

Whether Nasr-ul-Mulk was in imminent danger or not it is difficult to say. From what Mr. Churchill saw at the Palace there is no doubt that both he and the Ministers were badly scared, and Nasr-ul-Mulk's own apprehensions may be gauged from his requesting me to send Dr. Neligan with him as far as Resht, nominally in medical attendance, but really, as had been done when Dr. Scully accompanied the late Atabek to Kum in 1897, to protect him. This, I said, I was unable to do for the moment, but I allowed the head gholam to spend the night at Nasr-ul-Mulk's house, and sent two gholams to accompany him to Enzeli, whither his Excellency started at sunrise on Monday morning. A good many attempts were made by the local enjuments at Kazvin and Resht to persuade Nasr-ul-Mulk to return to Tehran, but he adhered to his determination to go to Europe, and was to leave Enzeli for Baku and Petrovsk on the 21th. M. Rabino had authorized one of the gholams to accompany his Excellency as far as Baku. He reached Vienna on the 30th, and proposes to go to England.

To return to events in Tehran, there is little doubt but that on Sunday night the Shah had the game in his own hands. There were no Ministers; the Assembly, cowed by the arrest of Ala-ed-Dowleh and Nasr-ul-Mulk, had dispersed; the political Committees—its only real support—had shown no sign of life, and the Shah's forces terrorized the town. His Majesty had but to occupy the Baharistan and Mosque, and seize a few of the popular leaders, and the *coup d'Etat* was complete. But either from over-confidence, or more probably because his nerve failed—and no doubt the intervention of His Majesty's Legation on behalf of Nasr-ul-Mulk had had its effect—the Shah made no move. Breathing space was thus given to the Popular party, and

when, to the general surprise, the Assembly met as usual the following morning, the Political Committees had had time to regain their courage.

In the course of the day the Baharistan garden and the courts of the Sepahsalar Mosque, which adjoins it, filled with people, the roofs of both buildings and other coigns of vantage were slowly occupied by armed members of the enjuments, and it was stated that by the evening there were as many as 3,000 men with rifles ready to defend the Mejlis.

I was twice approached during the day by the friends of the Assembly to ascertain whether the Legation would not in some way or other give assistance to the cause of reform, but gave it clearly to be understood that I would do nothing of the kind, and would do all in my power to prevent the Legation from being forced into taking any part whatever in the struggle. My visitors both said that their party would not take the offensive, but would defend itself, if attacked, to the last.

About 5 o'clock I received a visit from Bahram Mirza, a son of the Zil-es-Sultan, who told me that his father, and the other nobles and great officials, had determined to side with the Assembly. He described the Shah as practically out of his senses.

The night passed quietly, though, as during the past few nights, a few shots were fired in and about Cannon Square. A small number of armed men remained on guard over the Assembly, and Cossacks patrolled the streets.

On Tuesday morning, the 17th instant, a number of men brought in from the Shah's stud farm near Veramin were found to have occupied the west end of Cannon Square. Tents were pitched for them, food and spirits were served out, and a party of Cossacks with guns took up a position beside them.

Towards midday some of the roughs left, but in the evening their numbers again increased, and more tents appeared. During the day they murdered two persons and assaulted a few others. In the morning I was asked by some of the leading Mollahs and clergy to send a series of telegrams for them over the British wires, as the Shah had closed the Persian offices. The telegrams were addressed to the Ulema of all the greater towns of Persia, and of Kerbela and Nejef, describing the situation here. I declined to do so, as did also Mr. Barker, Director of the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

A letter from the Assembly was brought to the Legation and to the other foreign missions recalling the efforts of the people to free themselves from the tyranny of despotism and calling us to witness to the righteousness of their cause, and asking for sympathy in their struggle for freedom.

The Assembly sat all the morning debating as to the demands to be made to the Shah, and in the afternoon a deputation was selected to wait on His Majesty and require him to agree to the following:—

1. Exile of Saad-ed-Dowleh.
2. Amir Behadur Jang to be placed under the orders of the Ministry of War.
3. The Cossack Brigade also to be under that Department.
4. The Shah to take an oath before the Assembly to observe the constitution.
5. Punishment of the men who had fired on the Assembly.
6. Formation of a national guard of 200 men for the protection of the Assembly.

In the afternoon, on my way to the Russian Legation, I passed in front of the Mejlis, and found only a few hundred people about it, and a small number of men armed with rifles on the walls and roofs of the surrounding buildings. Some of the shops in the adjoining streets were open, and as the Veramin party in Cannon Square was then at its lowest numbers, the situation seemed to be improving, especially as the demands formulated by the Mejlis were not unreasonable.

The Shah's reply was of the usual temporizing character, but he conceded the return of Ala-ed-Dowleh and Nasr-ul-Mulk, which had been previously demanded. The sitting of the Assembly continued, and the crowd round the building increased towards evening till it was estimated that there were some 6,000 to 7,000 armed men present. Meanwhile the Court party had been straining every resource to increase their strength, and at one time there were as much as 1,500 men in the Cannon Square. The leaders of the Popular party were clearly apprehensive for their personal safety, and few of them slept in their own houses. The President of the Assembly spent some hours at the German Legation (see my despatch No. 277 of the 30th December). The following day the situation remained practically unchanged while *pourparlers* were in progress between the Palace and the Parliament, though it was clear that the Shah's demand for the expulsion of four or five of the most prominent Deputies from the Assembly could never be accepted.

On Thursday the Popular leaders, feeling their position secure, persuaded their adherents to leave the Baharistan as a proof that they were prepared to trust the Shah's assurances that he had no hostile intentions against the Mejlis. The gardens of the Mosque adjoining it were, however, still occupied, and two demonstrations were made by the Cannon Square party intended to provoke a conflict. In the evening telegrams of support to the popular cause were received from Resht, Kazvin, and Tabreez, while the enjumen of the latter town announced that the Shah should be deposed. On Friday the tents of the Shah's hooligans, which had been removed the previous evening, reappeared. Further telegrams menacing the Shah with deposition or death came in from the provincial enjuments, and by the evening, though both parties had remained quiescent all day, and a Ministry been formed, though not actually appointed, the general situation seemed to be as strained as ever. In the course of the evening I received a visit from Saad-ed-Dowleh's nephew, Mahmoud Khan, asking me to send a letter to the Shah to the effect that Saad-ed-Dowleh was under British protection. The request was made on the ground that in 1906, when Saad-ed-Dowleh was in "bast" at the British Vice-Consulate at Yezd, His Majesty's Legation had obtained an assurance from the late Shah's Government for his life. I declined to accede to the request.

On the following day, the 21st instant, although it was said that the Shah was about to accept all the Assembly's demands, and that a new Ministry had been formed, there was little, if any, improvement in the situation. The people were discontented at the composition of the Cabinet, and mistrusted the Shah's sincerity, and it was evident that the pretended reconciliation did not reassure them. At the Palace signs of depression were evident. The Shah, disturbed by the evidence of the Zil-es-Sultan's alliance with the Constitutionalists, suddenly sent a rudely-worded order to His Imperial Highness to leave the country. The Zil at once sent his son Bahram Mirza to the Legation to invoke its protection, but as I was aware that the Zil had unquestionably been furnishing arms and probably money also to the enjuments, and that his sons had shown themselves armed at the Baharistan, I gave him rather a cool reception, suggesting that his father could reassure himself by reading the various letters in which he had been assured of British assistance in case of need.

On Sunday, at 11 o'clock, as prearranged, M. de Hartwig and I had an audience of the Shah. M. de Hartwig set forth the situation lucidly and concisely, and asked His Imperial Majesty to give assurances that he had no hostile designs towards the Constitution. In reply the Shah said that he had never entertained any hostility to the Parliament, and asked how that could be possible, seeing that he himself had signed it and had brought it to his father to sign. He desired only to suppress those enjuments, which abused and vilified himself and his family, and were openly seditious. I replied that His Majesty's assurances that he harboured no hostile intentions against the Assembly, and would work with it in future for the good of the country, afforded us the greatest satisfaction. The audience lasted less than a quarter of an hour.

The Shah was thinner than when I saw him last, but seemed to be in fair health. Outwardly he was calm—his face is singularly inexpressive—but I thought he was decidedly nervous.

At 3 o'clock M. de Hartwig and I called on the Zil. The object of our visit was explained only with many childish and even offensive interruptions on the part of his Imperial Highness, which were received by the Russian Minister with extraordinary, if not indeed excessive, patience.

At 5 o'clock we went to the French Legation, where M. de la Martinière, whom I had apprised of the success of our *démarche* at the Palace, told us that he had explained to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, Minister-designate for Foreign Affairs, the motives of our action, and had invited him to bring to the Legation the President of the Assembly and the two Vice-Presidents to hear from us of the assurances we had obtained from the Shah. Mushir-ed-Dowleh had been much struck with the strength which must accrue to the Parliament by what was practically a guarantee of its stability by the northern and southern neighbouring Powers, and promised to do his best to bring about the meeting we proposed. In fact, the only suggestion he had to make was that the implied guarantee would gain a more official character if made at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

On reaching home I learnt of the German Chargé d'Affaires' audience with the Shah, and I at once informed the Russian and French Ministers.

Early on Monday morning M. de la Martinière came to the Legation and informed me that late in the evening Mushir-ed-Dowleh had sent his Chef de Cabinet to intimate

that, while very sensible of our efforts to compose the quarrel between the Shah and his people, the Assembly felt that a better guarantee of the Shah's benevolent attitude would be obtained if His Imperial Majesty took a solemn oath on the Koran before all the foreign Representatives. We had no doubt as to the German source of this suggestion, and repaired at once to the Russian Legation to discuss the situation. A few minutes after our arrival the Dutch Minister was announced, and as he has once or twice quite unconsciously lent himself to Baron von Richthofen's aims, he was at once admitted, in the hope that he would be able to furnish evidence of our German colleague's activity. M. de Sturler proved quite ready to do so, all the time expressing disapproval of Baron von Richthofen's line of action, and pledged himself to abstain from any step which would facilitate collective action by the foreign Representatives. As the American Minister and the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires also took a similar line, Baron von Richthofen's attempt to "internationalize" a purely internal Persian question seemed destined to fail.

In the afternoon the Russian and French Ministers and I called on Mushir-ed-Dowleh. In an interview, lasting nearly three hours, we explained the situation to him fully and frankly, but it was quite apparent that, though convinced himself, Mushir-ed-Dowleh had little hope of persuading the Assembly that the insidious advice of the German Legation was not disinterested.

Meantime the general situation had become more threatening. The Tabreez enjumen had succeeded in circulating throughout Persia the threat of deposing the Shah, and the larger cities, where the idea of Constitutional Government has taken root, appeared to be greatly excited. A telegram of similar tenor addressed to the German Legation, and marked "Copy to the other Missions," was received from the same enjumen. Telegrams promising armed support against the Shah had been received from Shiraz, Ispahan, Resht, Kazvin, Kerman, and Meshed, and signs of sympathy had come in from other quarters. In Tehran itself, despite unmistakable signs that the Shah must yield, as he did late in the afternoon, the excitement against His Majesty was, if anything, more marked. There was general discontent at the composition of the new Cabinet, which included two or three members of dubious loyalty to the Constitution, and the clamour for the execution of the leaders of the Shah's roughs was increasing. The crowds at the Beharistan and Mosque were, if anything, larger, although the Cannon Square was now clear. There was less firing that evening than in any night since the 14th.

On Tuesday morning the town wore its usual peaceful appearance, except that the Assembly building and Mosque were still crowded, and the bazaars closed, and the Assembly did its best to persuade the enjuments to disperse. By midday, however, it became clear that the Popular party, feeling that they had the upper hand, desired to push their advantage home. Threats of vengeance on their wives and families, if they remained faithful, were freely used towards the men of the Shah's Tabreez body-guard; the loyalty of the Cossack Brigade was undermined, and the deposition and assassination of the Shah were openly advocated. At the Palace there was the utmost depression; the Shah himself was in terror of his life, and his adherents and servants were deserting him. On every hand one heard it said that His Majesty would not survive for a week.

In the afternoon I called on the Russian Minister, and we discussed the situation at great length. We felt that for the moment the important point was to keep the Shah on the throne. Worthless as his character is—and it is their knowledge of this, gained while the Shah was Governor of Azerbaijan, that has made the Tabreezis so bitterly hostile to him—the only chance of preventing Persia from falling still deeper into the slough of anarchy appeared to be in maintaining him. Should he be removed, there would be the prospect of a long Regency, and in view of the active, if unobtrusive, part the Zil had taken in the existing crisis, it was fairly safe to prophesy that he would, in the excitement of the moment, be elected as Regent. Zil-es-Sultan is undoubtedly more capable and intelligent than his nephew, and he had the reputation of being a "strong man." In other ways it is doubtful whether his character is one whit better than that of the Shah, or would qualify him better for the position of a Constitutional Monarch, even if he wished to play such a rôle. I do not think that a single intelligent person could be found in Persia who is not convinced that, were the Zil to become Regent, he would at once set to work to destroy the Mejlis, and that by the most violent methods, nor would he scruple to remove the young Shah. On the other hand, all disinterested Persians are agreed in looking on a Council of Regency as being as unworkable as would be a Republic. Owing to the personal jealousies and interested motives from which Persians seem to be quite unable to free themselves, an experiment of the kind would

result in hopeless and helpless confusion, with a Central Government even feebler than at present. If, then, Constitutional Government is to have a fair trial, the best chance of success would be under a Shah who has already had his lesson severely taught to him.

The essential thing, therefore, for the moment was the preservation of the Shah. But we could do nothing here. To attempt to protect the Palace with the handful of men attached to the two Legations would have been worse than folly. The moral influence of Great Britain and Russia had been undermined for a time by the suspicions of our motives instilled by the German Legation. Moreover, so long as there were no Ministers, and so long as the Assembly and the Administration—such as it was—were completely dominated by the then frankly Revolutionary Committees, there was no point at which to exercise influence.

With those considerations before us, and knowing that the French Minister viewed the position in much the same serious light as ourselves, we decided to send to our respective Governments the identic message (see my telegram No. 412 of the 24th December) that a crisis might supervene at any moment, in order that they might concert as to the line of action they might see fit to adopt.

The same evening Saad-ed-Dowleh left the Palace where he had been for the past three or four days, and took "bast" at the Dutch Legation. It seemed to be the rat leaving the sinking ship.

On Christmas and the two following days there was a progressive *détente*, although the crowds about the Assembly House and Mosque did not diminish. The Shah has taken no steps to fulfil his promise that the men who fired on the Baharistan on the 16th, and committed excesses in the town, should be punished, nor has he attended the Assembly to take his solemn oath on the Koran.

On Friday, the 27th, a party of Mollahs headed by Sheikh Fazlullah, who has since been excommunicated by the Great Mujteheds at Kerbela, and Seyed Ail Yezdi, who have been the most prominent propagandists of the Shah's cause, took refuge in the Masjid Mervi on the east of the Palace, and with them were some of the roughs whose punishment was one of the conditions of the pact made with the Shah.

A few of the Mollahs tried to take "bast" in the Russian Legation on Saturday night, but were turned away, and on Sunday a similar attempt was made at the Turkish Embassy, and a considerable number of them kept hanging about there till the 31st.

The Shah has remained in the seclusion of the Anderoon since Christmas day, and has pleaded indisposition as an excuse for twice declining to receive the Dutch Minister, who asked an audience of His Majesty in connection with Saad-ed-Dowleh's presence at the Netherlands Legation.

During the earlier part of the week there was much talk of inviting the foreign Representatives to be present at the proposed ceremonial oath-taking of the Shah before the Assembly. Both the Russian Minister and I have done our best to prevent this taking place, and to carry to its proper conclusion the step which we took at the Palace on the 22nd. There has been, however, a great disinclination on the part of the Assembly to receive anything like a guarantee of the national liberties from the two Legations, and though the offer has not been actually refused, it has been difficult to find a method of conveying our message in a manner agreeable to the susceptibilities of the Assembly. However, on Friday Mushir-ed-Dowleh furnished M. de Hartwig with a rough draft of a declaration which we might each communicate to the President of the Assembly, and taking this as the basis we prepared a letter in French, which we submitted to his Excellency on Sunday. He suggested a couple of minor modifications, to which we agreed, and the two letters which, *mutatis mutandis*, are identic, were delivered on Sunday afternoon. I have the honour to inclose a copy of my own.

I confess that I have not been very anxious to make any communication in writing which might entail on the Legation the embarrassing obligation of keeping the Shah to the observance of his promises. I did not think, moreover, that such a communication would have any further practical effect on the situation; but the step seemed a necessary one to counteract the German Chargé d'Affaires' interference. The final letter, however, seems to be perfectly harmless, as it contains nothing more binding than a simple declaration that the assurances given by the Shah have convinced me of His Majesty's benevolent attitude to the Assembly.

Though the letters have not yet been read in the Assembly, Mushir-ed-Dowleh has assured me that there was no hitch to be feared.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Memorandum.

IL résulte d'un échange de vues qui s'est établi entre le Ministre de Russie et le Chargé d'Affaires d'Angleterre réunis à la Légation de France en vue d'examiner les moyens à mettre en œuvre pour remédier au danger de la situation présente, que :

1. Une démarche collective auprès de Sa Majesté s'impose pour en obtenir des assurances qu'aucun projet n'existe dans son esprit pouvant amener l'abolition du régime constitutionnel, et qu'elle entend collaborer avec le Parlement au bien du pays ;

2. Que ces assurances étant obtenues, il y aura lieu d'en informer le Parlement pour rétablir des relations de commune confiance entre la Couronne et la Chambre.

Le Parlement, ayant obtenu des assurances, pourra s'affranchir de la tutelle des andjoumans révolutionnaires qui, n'ayant aucune responsabilité dans l'action Gouvernementale, n'hésitent pas à entraîner le pays vers les pires dangers. La preuve en a été faite avant-hier encore par la notification que le Comité de Tauris a osé faire de la déchéance de Sa Majesté ;

3. Que, d'autre part, en face de l'attitude prise depuis quelque temps par le Prince Zil-es-Sultan, qui n'a pas hésité à profiter de la situation pour se mettre derrière les agitateurs et poser sa candidature éventuelle au trône, il y a lieu également de donner un avertissement sévère à ce personnage.

Les Représentants de Russie et d'Angleterre décident de se rendre près de Zil-es-Sultan comme corollaire à la démarche près du Schah, et de lui faire comprendre le danger de son attitude, qui est contraire aux assurances qu'il avait données maintes fois au moment où il invoqua la protection des deux Légations.

Comme les Gouvernements Russe et Anglais ont entendu assurer la succession normale de la famille régnante actuelle, ils ne sauraient admettre la conduite du Prince Zil-es-Sultan, et se réservent de lui en faire ressortir tous les dangers.

Inclosure 2 in No. 75.

Mr. Marling to President of Assembly.

M. le Président,

Téhéran, le 30 Décembre, 1907.

J'AI exactement reçu la lettre de l'Assemblée Nationale en date du 11 Zil-Kadé concernant les événements de ces jours derniers.

J'ai pris connaissance avec le plus vif intérêt des bonnes intentions de l'Assemblée Nationale.

Tous ceux qui ont à l'égard de la Perse de profondes et sincères intentions de bienveillance, et en particulier la Légation Royale d'Angleterre, qui nourrit pour ce pays les desirs les plus vifs de bien et de bonheur, attendaient impatiemment la fin des désordres, et dans un même sentiment humanitaire se sont efforcés d'apaiser l'état de choses regrettable de ces jours derniers. Aussi ont-ils voulu exposer à Sa Majesté tout le mal qui résulterait de la prolongation d'une situation si troublée.

C'est ainsi que je n'ai pas manqué de m'assurer d'une manière amicale que Sa Majesté n'avait pour le Parlement que des sentiments qui répondent entièrement au bonheur que nous souhaitons pour le pays.

Par des paroles qui m'étaient personnellement adressées, Sa Majesté a bien voulu me faire part de sa ferme résolution d'agir conformément aux principes de la Constitution et de concert avec l'Assemblée Nationale, en respectant les lois fondamentales.

Il en résulte pour moi la conviction absolue que, aussi à l'avenir, Sa Majesté ne laissera faire aucune démarche qui serait en opposition au serment et à la promesse donnée à l'Assemblée Nationale.

J'adresse mes félicitations bien cordiales au Parlement à l'occasion de l'accord intervenu.

En priant votre Excellence de vouloir bien porter ce qui précède à la connaissance des Membres de l'honorable Assemblée Nationale, je me crois fondé d'exprimer la conviction qu'ils y verront un témoignage nouveau des sentiments d'amitié et de profonde bienveillance qui unissent l'Angleterre et la Perse.

Veillez, &c.

(Signé) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[2000]

No. 76.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 18. Commercial.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 21, 1907.

I HAVE received a report from His Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah stating that the German firm of Wonekhaus and Co. have leased a piece of land in that place, on the river bank, measuring 100 metres by 40, for a period of eight years.

I venture to report this to you as an indication of the manner in which the Germans are seeking to strengthen their commercial position in the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[2003]

No. 77.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20, 1908.)

(No. 21. Commercial.)

Sir,

Tehran, December 31, 1907.

I HAVE recently received copy of a despatch No. 7, Commercial, of the 25th November last, addressed to you by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, forwarding a most able and carefully compiled Report by Mr. Chick on the operations of the Hamburg-Amerika Line in the Persian Gulf.

I venture to draw your especial attention to the following of the tabulated conclusions at the end of Mr. Chick's Report :—

(1.) Reform in the local working of the Imperial Bank of Persia.

I propose to take an early opportunity of bringing to the notice of the Chief Manager of the bank in Tehran the considerations set forth in the body of the Report, with a view to ascertain whether, in Mr. Rabino's opinion, the bank would be able and willing to take any steps of the nature suggested.

The matter seems to me one of considerable importance, more especially in view of German activity in southern Persia, and their evident determination to obtain a commercial and financial footing in this country, and I venture to suggest the advisability of approaching the Board of Directors in London on the subject, pointing out to them the prejudice likely to result to their interests from the establishment of a rival banking establishment at Bushire—a contingency which must be reckoned with as a practical factor since the granting of a Concession for a German Bank by the Persian Government.

(2.) Lighterage from British steamers in British-owned lighters.

The danger of a lighter service being inaugurated by other than British enterprise, appears to me both real and grave. The Shipping Companies forming the British combine are no doubt aware of the desirability of instituting such a service, but it might not perhaps be amiss to draw their attention to the danger of foreign competition in this respect. Moreover, it would appear that such a service would be remunerative to its initiators, and, even if the British Shipping Companies are unwilling themselves to undertake it, other British firms might be attracted were the Board of Trade to give the necessary publicity to the requirements of the case. The knowledge of the prosecution of the project in question would enjoy the support of His Majesty's Government and of this Legation could hardly fail, did such a course commend itself to you, Sir, to serve as a substantial inducement. It might also be pointed out with advantage that an undertaking of this nature would, from its geographical position and from the fact that none of its operations would be conducted on land, be far less susceptible to the aggravating interference of the Persian authorities, by which the development of other foreign enterprises in this country has been so frequently hampered, and sometimes arrested.

(3.) Greater regularity in the sailings of British vessels from Persian waters.

A warning, it seems might usefully be conveyed in this connection to the management of the Shipping Companies concerned; for there is no apparent reason why British shipowners should be unable to give notice, at all events approximate, of their sailings, if foreign Companies are in a position to do so.

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(5) and (7) are subjects with which the Board of Trade would appear specially competent to deal, and I trust that their special attention may be invited to the points raised.

(4) is a question which might involve the acquisition of a Concession from the Persian Government—a proposal which, in existing circumstances, and for reasons which it is unnecessary for me to recapitulate here, could not be entertained with any prospect on arriving at a satisfactory result.

(6.) This subject always occupies the vigilant attention of the Legation, and I shall not fail to furnish the earliest possible information of any German Concession scheme which may come to my knowledge.

(8.) *Confidential.*—I understand from Major Knox that your Department has been kept informed of his efforts to arrange for direct shipments of Mauritius sugar from that island to the Persian Gulf. The desirability of securing a share for British merchants in this important branch of trade, now almost exclusively in non-British hands, is unquestionable, and I venture to hope that every legitimate encouragement will be afforded by His Majesty's Government in order to assure the success of the experiment.

I would, in conclusion, draw your attention to Mr. Chick's remarks concerning the sample-room at the Bushire Consulate-General—an institution which, if fully taken advantage of, must prove of the greatest utility in familiarizing native merchants with British products and manufactures, and also in enabling British firms to gauge, with the minimum of risk and trouble, the nature and extent of the requirements of the local market. Were wider publicity among British firms to be given by the Board of Trade to its existence, its utility would undoubtedly be increased, with the most beneficial results to all parties concerned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[2006]

No. 78.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 2, 1908.

ALTHOUGH Tehran is now relatively quiet, and the provinces have been much less affected than might reasonably have been apprehended by the knowledge of what was happening at the capital, I fear that relief is only temporary, and that Persia is drifting nearer and nearer to complete anarchy.

The struggle between the Shah and his people has resulted in a complete victory for the latter, but I am not sanguine that the prospects of the establishment of constitutional government on a durable basis have been much improved thereby. For the moment, indeed, the Shah has been completely cowed, and is now retired into the Anderun, whence, it is said, he is still continuing his intriguing interference in the Executive. The Popular party, excited by the accounts given by the local Tabreez Committee of His Majesty's duplicity and incapacity while Governor of Azerbaijan, has the profoundest mistrust and hatred for him, and there is every reason to fear that should the public again feel convinced that he is attempting to thwart the Assembly, he will be overwhelmed by a storm of rage and indignation and driven from the throne, if, indeed, he escaped with his life. As I have ventured to observe in another despatch, the one chance of constitutional government appears to be in retaining Mohammed Ali on the throne, but it is almost too much to hope that, with his love of intrigue, his ingrained duplicity, and his detestation of the restraints imposed on a constitutional Monarch, he will be able to refrain from the interference that is so much resented.

On the other hand, the Assembly and its supporters are not free from blame. The Assembly has, to some extent, owing no doubt to the mischievous interference of the Enjumens, shown no aptitude whatever for its proper functions, and I have heard it said by an observant Persian that, had the Shah postponed his attempted *coup d'État* for a few months, public opinion, realizing that the experiment of representative government was premature, would have demanded the dissolution of Parliament.

But it is also ignorant and corrupt. There is probably only a small minority of the Assembly who are sincere in wishing for reform, or have anything but a vague idea of what it would imply; and though some of these, such as Taghi Zadeh, carry

great weight in the Assembly, the ignorant majority of Deputies are often swayed by five or six powerful and self-interested Members who really guide the work of the House. Of the corruption, a single instance will suffice. Large sums have been collected, mostly by indirect menace from those suspected of reactionary leanings, for the foundation of the National Bank, and lodged with one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly. Of this money, which may have amounted to as much as 50,000*l.*, no account has been given. It may have been expended in payments of wages and salaries; it is, however, currently said to have been quietly absorbed by the Members of the Assembly and Enjumens. Should this be true, with dishonesty such as this, and with self-interest and mutual distrust rampant, there is not much to be hoped for from the Assembly as it now exists. Nor is it likely, also, that a new election would result in the return of better Members. The fact is that Persia is not yet, and will not for a couple of generations to come be, fit for representative institutions.

The Ministers, again, appear quite unequal to the task laid on them. In spite of the impotency to which the Shah has been reduced, they are almost in as great dread of him as in the palmy days of absolutism, and what between this traditional respect of the Sovereign and fear of offending the Medjliss and Enjumens, the executive power is practically paralyzed. Persia stands in need of a strong man to prevent her from falling to pieces from her own inherent weakness; but, so far, no such man has been found, and it seems impossible for her to escape that fate.

It may be that the Popular leaders will recognize that in the maintenance of the present Shah lies the best hope for the existing régime, and in that case the worst that will happen will be a period of general but relatively peaceful anarchy, not much worse than has existed for the past few months. On the other hand, it seems more probable that some imprudent action of the Shah will again rouse the popular fury against him, and that His Majesty will be driven from the throne. Should this unfortunately occur, and the Russian Minister is deeply convinced of its probability, Zil-es-Sultan, the only member of the Imperial family who has any following in the country who has shown any capacity for rule, although by the most brutal and unscrupulous methods, would undoubtedly make a bid for the throne, and the consequences might be more serious.

There is, however, one factor which makes it permissible to hope that if disorder ensues it will not be violent or of long duration, viz., the pacific, not to say timorous, character of the people; and how strong this is may be gauged from the fact that, despite all the excitement of the recent crisis, no actual collision took place between the rival parties.

It remains also to be seen what effect the frontier dispute with Turkey may have on the internal situation. The failure of the Government to obtain through the two mediating Powers a satisfactory solution of the question, or even to arrest the advance of the Turks, has done much to discredit it in the eyes of the nation, and any palpable success in this direction would restore confidence in them for a time.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[2007]

No. 79.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 2. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 2, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 277 of the 30th December, 1907, I have the honour to report that, according to information which has reached the Russian Minister, the German Chargé d'Affaires would appear to be as active as ever in his endeavours to forward German interests in Persia, in spite of the warning which we have reason to believe has been addressed to him.

It seems that there has been, to use M. de Hartwig's words, a "conciliabule," composed of Mukhiber-es-Sultaneh, Minister of Justice, Sani-ed-Dowleh, ex-President of the Assembly and now Minister of Public Works, Baron von Richthofen, and a fourth person, from whom M. de Hartwig's information is derived (but whose name he could not or would not give), and that Baron von Richthofen, after enlarging on the malevolent designs of Great Britain and Russia against Persia, impressed on his audience that Germany alone was able and willing to serve her. Germany felt quite able to hold her own in the south of Persia, where British enterprise in commercial

matters was languid; but what she specially desired was to gain a footing in the north, so as to free Persia from the commercial monopoly enjoyed by Russia, and for this purpose Germany was ready to build railways under a suitable Concession.

It is of course impossible that Germany should be able at present to find the capital required for any large railway construction scheme, but with the undoubtedly great influence which Baron von Richthofen has succeeded in establishing with the President of the Assembly, it is just possible that he might obtain a railway Concession on easy terms and for a long period which would eventually prove of value in connection with the Bagdad Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[2008]

No. 80.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 3.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 3, 1908.

I GATHER from your telegram No. 215 of the 30th December, 1907, that M. de Hartwig has been consulting his Government as to the action to be taken should the Shah take refuge at the Russian Legation. He has said little or nothing to me on the subject, presumably because the contingency was at any time improbable, and seems to be growing daily more remote. The Shah might no doubt at present or at any other moment of quiet easily reach either Legation without much difficulty, and once within the gates would, I believe, be perfectly safe, for the public would recognize that, by taking refuge with a foreign Power, he had virtually abdicated, and must leave the country, which is all they require.

But it is in the last degree improbable that he would take so despairing a step unless driven to it by immediate and imminent fear of an attack on the Palace; and in that case his chances of reaching the Russian Legation would be small, as he would have to pass through some of the most crowded streets of the town close to the Bazaar. He would be more likely to make for this Legation, but I believe that, unless the mob were actually at his heels, our prestige would be quite sufficient to secure him and the Legation from attack.

Nor do I think that, should the necessity arise, there would be any serious difficulty in escorting the Shah to the coast in safety.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[2036]

No. 81.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 10.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 9, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram of the 5th instant, supplementing your telegram No. 7 of the 3rd, I took occasion, in acknowledging the receipt of M. Isvolsky's letter of the 5th instant (23rd December, 1897, o.s.), to inform him that it was understood that a British and Russian escort should accompany the Shah to the frontier only in case of necessity and if he had taken refuge in one of the Legations.

M. Isvolsky told me to-day that, from the telegrams which he had recently received from Tehran, it would appear that the situation had calmed down considerably, and that there appeared to be for the moment no immediate danger of a crisis occurring. The communication which the British and Russian Representatives had made to the President of the Assembly in regard to the engagements which the Shah had given to them appeared to have been well received and to have caused a good impression.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[2038]

No. 82.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 12.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 9, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY asked me to-day if I could give him any information as to whether Soujboulak had been actually occupied by Ottoman troops or not, as his reports were somewhat vague. I told his Excellency that I could not reply off-hand, but my impression was that a report had been current that the Turkish troops had occupied or were about to occupy that town, though I was not sure if this report had been confirmed.

I inquired whether he had thought over the question of the nature of the pressure which might have eventually to be brought to bear on the Sublime Porte in regard to a solution of the Turco-Persian frontier difficulty. He said he had been considering it, but had come to no conclusion, and it would of course be well to first allow the Turco-Persian Commission to show that it was incapable of coming to an arrangement by itself. There was, too, always the question of Macedonia to be borne in mind.

I was told the other day that M. Isvolsky is a little anxious lest the Balkan States, and perhaps especially Bulgaria, might take advantage of a joint Anglo-Russian pressure on the Sublime Porte to push their own schemes, and cause Turkey some embarrassments at the same moment. He was meditating in what manner these States could be given clearly to understand, should the case arise, that they would not be allowed to profit by the difficulties of Turkey, and that any joint action of Great Britain and Russia would be limited strictly and solely to the objects for which such action was taken.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[2039]

No. 83.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 13.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 9, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 610 of the 12th ultimo, reporting a conversation with M. Isvolsky as to reinforcing the Consular guards at Tabreez, his Excellency told me to-day that the Persian Chargé d'Affaires had suggested to him to withdraw the twenty-five men which had been sent to that town, as the Persian Government were quite willing to dispatch some of the Cossack Brigade from Tehran to protect any Russian interests. M. Isvolsky had replied that he did not feel at liberty to meet this request, and that the additional guard had been sent merely to afford some additional protection to the Russian Consulate and some Russian establishments, which the local authorities were unable to safeguard. He had added that His Majesty's Government had felt it necessary to strengthen their Consular guards in one or two towns, and that these precautions were clearly prudent, and were also in the interests of the Persian Government, as they might be the means of preventing some regrettable incidents.

He had telegraphed also in the above sense to M. de Hartwig; and he added that reinforcing the Consular guard at Tabreez was the minimum of measures which could be taken, and that he had declined to adopt the proposals of the Russian Consul-General to have guards placed on the post roads and to make a military demonstration on the frontier.

I said that it seemed to me that the steps which he had taken were moderate and reasonable, and that the proposal to weaken the Cossack Brigade at Tehran by dispatching detachments to Tabreez did not appear to be a very practical or wise one.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[2046]

No. 84.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)(No. 21.)
Sir,*St. Petersburg, January 15, 1908.*

THE Emperor held the customary reception at Tsarskoë Selo yesterday, on which occasion the Diplomatic Body present their congratulations on the New Year. I took the opportunity to mention to His Majesty that His Majesty's Government were much gratified by the cordial co-operation which M. Isvolsky had afforded during the crisis in Persia, and that it had been of great advantage that the two Governments had been enabled to act so harmoniously together. I thought that you would wish me to bear this testimony to the frank and loyal attitude which M. Isvolsky has adopted during recent events in Persia.

His Majesty said that he had been particularly pleased with the amicable manner in which both Governments had acted together, and he remarked that it was a source of satisfaction to him that the two Representatives at Tehran had also worked cordially together. He attached great importance to the Agents of both countries in Persia following the same course which had been agreed upon between their respective Governments. His Majesty added that at one time it seemed possible that the Zil-es-Sultan was endeavouring to set himself up as a Pretender to the Throne, but he hoped that the words of warning which had been addressed to him by the British and Russian Representatives had damped his ardour and had checked any intrigues which he might have had in contemplation.

His Majesty said that he feared that the situation in Morocco was not very promising; and I remarked that the proclamation of Mulai Hafid at the three capitals of Fez, Mequinez, and Marakesh had undoubtedly introduced a fresh complication.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[2053]

No. 85.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)(No. 28.)
Sir,*St. Petersburg, January 16, 1908.*

M. ISVOLSKY informed me to-day that, as a simple measure of precaution, it had been considered advisable to make a slight redistribution of the forces near the Persian frontier, but he could tell me that in the whole of the *rayon* of Julfa only 600 Cossacks had been stationed, so that I could see that the measures which had been taken were modest. In the event of any very serious trouble occurring at Tabreez, which endangered the lives of Russian subjects, these 600 Cossacks would be near at hand to afford assistance and protection. The Persian Government, through their Chargé d'Affaires here, had made representations on the subject, and had evidently received exaggerated reports as to what had taken place.

He had told the Chargé d'Affaires that though he did not feel called upon to give any explanations as to what the Russian authorities might consider fit to do within their own frontiers, he would give him a true account of the measures which had been adopted. M. Isvolsky added that the strictest orders had been given to the officers in command on no account to cross the frontier without receiving explicit instructions to that effect from head-quarters.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[2225]

No. 86.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 20.)(No. 12.)
(Telegraphic.) P.*St. Petersburg, January 20, 1908.*

FINANCIAL Adviser in Persia. Your telegram No. 18 of 18th January.

The question of Adviser's instructions arose during Minister for Foreign Affairs' absence, and he was unacquainted with it. I have explained the matter to him, and he has promised to let me have his proposals very shortly. I said I believed we both

merely required to be informed by the French Government of the tenor of M. Bizot's instructions in order to be sure that they did not exceed the limits within which it had been thought desirable to keep his action. I trust my statement was correct.

Above repeated to Mr. Marling.

[2250]

No. 87.

Sir A. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 21.)(No. 24.)
Sir,*Brussels, January 20, 1908.*

I HAVE had the honour to receive your despatch No. 6 of the 15th instant, respecting Anglo-Russian objections to the re-employment of M. Priem in Persia.

I understood from M. de Giers, and reported to you in my despatch No. 2 of the 1st instant, that the main complaint of the Russian Government against M. Priem was that he was intriguing for the post of "Conseiller Financier" to the Shah, and the concluding paragraph of Sir Arthur Nicolson's telegram No. 270, repeated to me in your telegram No. 8, respecting the hastening of the signature of the French Financial Adviser's contract, seemed to imply that His Majesty's Government were at one with that of Russia on this point.

I therefore considered myself justified, though, as you will observe, I left the initiative in the conversation to him, in associating myself with the remarks made by M. de Giers to M. Davignon as regards this particular subject. I will, however, take an opportunity of mentioning to his Excellency the point about M. Mornard, on which your despatch lays stress. I have in the meantime the honour to transmit herewith a copy of an article in yesterday's "Indépendance Belge,"* from which it would appear that M. Priem and most of the other prominent Belgians have been finally dismissed by the Persian Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ARTHUR H. HARDINGE.

[2282]

No. 88.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 21.)

Sir,

India Office, January 20, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 6th instant, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose, for the confidential information of Sir E. Grey, copies of telegrams to and from the Government of India regarding Count Albert von Quadt-Wykradt-Isny, who has been appointed German Minister in Persia.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 88.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, January 10, 1908.

WITH reference to telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran, dated the 29th ultimo, on the subject of the appointment of Count Quadt as Minister for Germany at Tehran, please send me particulars likely to be useful regarding his views, character, social qualities, &c., for the confidential information of the Foreign Office.

Inclosure 2 in No. 88.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P.

January 17, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram dated the 11th instant, I am sending by post full particulars about Count Quadt, who left, via Constantinople, for Tehran on the

* Not printed.

11th instant. Count, though not fond of society, is a great bridge player, and Countess is an accomplished and charming hostess. Both speak English very well; they will be great acquisition to the social life of Tehran. They have both been most popular in India, and he professes great regret at leaving country. While jealously watching interests of Germany, he may be relied upon not to do so discourteously or offensively. He does not strike me as brilliant, but collects information very assiduously, though not by improper means, so far as we know.

[2347]

No. 89.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 21, 1908.

I HAVE received the following telegram, No. 6, dated yesterday, from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urumia:

"The Turkish Commission is still expected. The vacillation of the Persians with regard to the lodging proposed for the Turks has been cause of delay; but they have now definitely offered house in Urumia, and I think it will be accepted.

"The Governor-General of Azerbaijan, in a telegram received yesterday by the Persian Commissioner, makes an urgent appeal for reinforcement, saying that the bridge in his rear is held by the Kurds, and that he is in a bad way. He states that the presence of small parties of Turkish troops, although these do not interfere actively, encourages the Kurds.

"I think that, if they were not encouraged by the Turks, the Kurds would not remain long in the field, as the weather at present is severe."

[2303]

No. 90.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 25.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 21, 1908.

MR. WRATISLAW'S telegram No. 5 of the 15th instant.

Firman Firma has been summoned to evacuate Soujboulak by Turkish Commander.

[2225]

No. 91.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 21, 1908.

PERSIA. Your statement to M. Isvolsky as to Financial Adviser's instructions is accurate.

Above refers to your telegram No. 12 of to-day.

[2303]

No. 92.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 21, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. Please refer to telegram from Tehran No. 25 of to-day's date.

This is the most distinctly aggressive act the Turks have as yet committed, as Soujboulak is in Persian territory, fully 20 miles from the district in dispute.

We should agree to joining the Russian Government in a protest to the Porte if they proposed such a course, and you should ascertain their views without making the proposal yourself. The Russian Government are concerned more directly than we, and it is for them, not us, to take the first step.

[1704]

No. 93.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 21, 1908.

PERSIAN Minister in London.

His Majesty has no objection to the appointment of Eltesham-es-Sultaneh, mentioned in your telegram No. 21 of the 16th instant.

[2396]

No. 94.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received January 22.)

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Admiralty, January 20, 1908.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a copy of a letter dated the 25th December, with its inclosures, which has been received from Captain Heneage, M.V.O., R.N., of His Majesty's ship "Hyacinth," acting for the Commander-in-chief, East Indies, respecting the capture of pirates at Dayir by His Majesty's ship "Highflyer."

A copy has also been sent to the India Office.

I am, &c.
(Signed) C. I. THOMAS.

Inclosure 1 in No. 94.

Captain Heneage to Admiralty.

SUBMITTED that I am forwarding the accompanying reports in order to avoid the delay of a week which would occur if they were forwarded to the Commander-in-chief, who is at present at Calcutta.

2. A duplicate of these reports has been forwarded to the Commander-in-chief, and for the information of the Indian Government.

For Commander-in-chief (on duty),

(Signed) A. W. HENEAGE, Flag Captain.

"Hyacinth," at Bombay, December 25, 1907.

Inclosure 2 in No. 94.

Captain Hickley to Commander-in-chief, East Indies.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

"Highflyer," at Bombay, December 23, 1907.

IN compliance with your orders, I have the honour to report that I left Bombay on the 21st November at 6:30 A.M., and proceeded at ordinary speed (11.5 knots) and reduced to economical speed on the 23rd at 8 A.M., intending to arrive at Henjam in the forenoon of the 25th November, on which day I expected "Sphinx" would arrive at Bushire.

2. I arrived at Henjam at 10:30 A.M. on the 25th November, and obtained telegraphic communication with "Sphinx" at Bushire on her arrival that afternoon, also with the Resident there, informing the latter of my orders, and asking him for further information concerning the pirates at Dayir, also for his advice in dealing with the natives of Dayir. I also informed the Resident informally that I hoped he might be able to come in "Sphinx" and join me.

3. On the 26th November I received a telegram from the "Sphinx" suggesting, at the request of the Resident, that the "Lapwing" at Muscat should join "Redbreast" on the Makran Coast for the suppression of arms traffic. I accordingly ordered "Lapwing" there under orders of "Redbreast."

4. I also received a telegram from "Sphinx" saying that the Resident suggested visiting Lingah in "Sphinx," to obtain further information concerning the pirates of Dayir and a local guide, to which I agreed, and telegraphed that I would meet

"Sphinx" at Lingah on the 29th November, and telegraphed the intended movements of "Highflyer" and "Sphinx" to you and the Admiralty.

5. On the 27th November I received a telegram from the Resident at Bushire to the effect that he considered it inadvisable, for political reasons, that "Highflyer" should appear at Lingah. I therefore altered my plans, and arranged to await "Sphinx's" arrival at Henjam. The "Sphinx" left Bushire on this date, the 27th November for Lingah with the Resident on board.

6. On the 29th November the "Sphinx" joined "Highflyer" at Henjam, bringing the Resident, two natives from Koweit who could identify the pirates, the Native Agent from Lingah, and a Sayyid (an influential man and a descendant of the Prophet) who had been obtained from a dhow at sea, he having volunteered to come. The Resident and Commander Litchfield dined with me that night, when we discussed the question of the pirates of Dayir, and I decided that "Sphinx" should leave the following day to obtain another witness from Shiwa, the sole survivor of the Persian dhow which had been pirated in November 1906, also to obtain a dhow from Lingah or elsewhere in which to land the Native Agent and Sayyid at Dayir, to obtain further necessary information. I also decided that "Highflyer" should leave Henjam for a rendezvous off Dayir on the 1st December.

7. On the 30th November I went on board "Sphinx," and held a further consultation, when the Native Agent from Lingah and the Sayyid were interviewed, and decided that "Sphinx" should leave at once for Dayir and obtain further information of the whereabouts of the pirates, &c., through the Sayyid and Native Agent, who would be landed there in the dhow at night, also to find out—

1. If the Khan of Dayir had harboured or was harbouring the pirates;
2. The feeling of the natives towards the pirates;
3. To obtain local guides from Dayir.

As the Native Agent would require two days at Dayir, I decided to postpone my departure until the 4th December, and to join "Sphinx" off Ras Naband on the 5th December, by which time the dhow should have returned from Dayir, Ras Naband being chosen as a rendezvous in order that "Highflyer" should not appear near Dayir before the proper moment, as her presence in that locality would immediately arouse suspicion, and it was absolutely necessary to obtain all possible information secretly.

8. During our consultation the action to be taken at Dayir was fully discussed. It was presumed that the natives of Dayir would not oppose us, but it was fully recognized that they would not give any information immediately they suspected that any active measures were being taken against the pirates, for fear of future treatment at the hands of the Khans of Dashti and Dayir (father and son), who without doubt have harboured these desperadoes. The Resident, Native Agent, and the Sayyid agreed with my suggestion that if sufficient evidence was obtained that the Khans were cognizant of, or had connived at, the presence of the pirates in or near Dayir, or refused to hand them over, strong measures should be taken to bring them to understand their responsibilities, and I suggested that in the latter contingency the fort in which the Khan of Dayir lived should be knocked down by gun fire, due warning having been given to the inhabitants. The broad outline of this action commended itself to the Resident, the Native Agent, and the Sayyid, who all said that it would have a more beneficial and lasting effect on the community than the perhaps evil effects of attacking and burning a village, with the attendant possibilities of innocent blood being shed.

9. The Resident came on board "Highflyer," and the "Sphinx" left at 1 P.M. on the 30th for Lingah and Dayir. I ordered the "Lapwing" from Jask to Bunder Abbas on the 30th to be at the disposal of the Consul there, as the Resident had received a telegram saying that the people there were inclined to panic, owing to a threatened attack by nomad tribes from inland. I have heard nothing more on the subject, and the "Lapwing" has returned to the Makran Coast.

10. During my stay at Henjam from the 25th November to the 3rd December I landed the small-arm companies, fully equipped, and the field and machine guns on several occasions for drill, which the officers and men much enjoyed in the delightful weather at this time of the year.

11. On the 4th December at 6 A.M. I left Henjam, and arrived off Ras Naband at daylight on the 5th, where "Sphinx" awaited my arrival, and as a strong shamal was blowing, and the dhow had not arrived from Dayir, and it was impossible under existing conditions to anchor off Dayir, I took shelter under the lee of Sheik Shuaib Island, anchoring at 5 P.M., "Sphinx" arriving later in the evening.

12. On the 6th December "Highflyer" weighed at 8 A.M., the weather having

moderated, and proceeded to Ras Naband, the "Sphinx" having proceeded there at 6 A.M. I found the dhow at 1 P.M. and communicated with her, the Native Agent coming on board bringing information that the pirates had left Dayir or its vicinity fifteen days ago, taking their families with them, the people there having made it unpleasant for them. It was reported that they had gone to Ganawa (Kanawa on chart), 50 miles to northward of Bushire, they having sworn to the Khan of Bandar Rig (a place close to) that they would live peacefully in that locality. This information was obtained from an owner of a dhow (a nakhoda) at Dayir, whose relatives had been killed by the pirates, by the Native Agent, and the Sayyid before mentioned. Having obtained this information, I proceeded at once to Dayir (leaving the hired dhow to be towed there by "Sphinx"), where I arrived at 7 P.M.; the "Sphinx" arrived later, and sent the Native Agent on shore that night to try and get the above-mentioned nakhoda on board.

13. On Saturday, the 7th December, the nakhoda having arrived on board in the morning, a further consultation was held on board "Highflyer," the Resident, Commander Litchfield, and the Native Agent being present; the nakhoda stated that he had received a message from one of the pirates to the effect that he (the pirate) regretted having killed the nakhoda's relations, and that he had no idea that the murdered men were any relation to the nakhoda. The nakhoda had recently visited Ganawa, where he had exchanged visits with the pirates, and had accepted their hospitality; he further stated that he was now a friend of the pirates and could now help us, and that he hoped with God's help that the pirates would be caught.

14. Similar circumstances now presented themselves at Bandar Rig or Ganawa to those which had existed at Dayir, which were fully discussed, and a similar conclusion was arrived at regarding the action to be taken with the Khan of Bandar Rig as had been arrived at regarding the Khan of Dayir, and that similar pressure should be brought to bear on Bandar Rig. The "Sphinx" then left Dayir for a rendezvous off Bandar Rig, and I went on shore with the Resident and paid a visit to the Khan of Dayir. Major Cox and I having agreed to tell him that it was lucky for him that the pirates were not there, as we should have considered him equally culpable with the pirates if he had harboured them, and Major Cox fully and forcibly pointed out to him his responsibilities in harbouring pirates or conniving at acts of piracy, to which he made fatuous replies, denying, of course, any connection with the pirates, and assuring us of his ready assistance in their arrest at any time. This Khan of Dayir is, in my opinion, a liar, and his father, the Khan of Dashti (the district in which Dayir is), is probably no better than his son, and they are equally culpable in the harbouring of the pirates subsequent to the piracies in November 1906 and January 1907.

15. I returned on board at 3 P.M., and sailed immediately for a rendezvous off Bandar Rig, where I arrived at daybreak on the 8th December with "Sphinx" on company, and anchored as close to the shore as possible (8,000 yards for "Highflyer," and 2,500 yards for "Sphinx"), but, had it been necessary, I think I could have anchored 3,000 yards off temporarily on a rising tide. I landed about 11 A.M. to see the Khan, with Commander Litchfield, Lieutenant Collins, my First Lieutenant, and the Residency dragoman as interpreter, having previously arranged with Major Cox a verbal ultimatum for the Khan of Bandar Rig, in which I forcibly and clearly pointed out to him that the sons of Humaidi, the pirates, were now at Ganawa with their families with his knowledge, that I had been ordered by the British Government to arrest them, and that I had come to warn him that, as he was harbouring and had given shelter to these pirates, he had placed himself in the unenviable position of being regarded as equally culpable with them, and under these circumstances my orders would warrant my taking extreme measures to punish him as well as them, but before doing so, however, I would give him this brief opportunity of co-operating with me in effecting the pirates' immediate capture (before sunset that day), failing which he must accept the consequences. I then called on him to tell me at once what methods he proposed to adopt. The Khan appeared to be much upset by these summary measures, and began to vacillate, and at first said he would do nothing without orders from the Persian Government, to which I replied that my orders were peremptory, and that I had no intention of waiting for him to receive any orders or to communicate with his Government, which argument appeared to appeal to him, and after an hour's interview the Khan promised to arrest the pirates forthwith, and as it was now noon, and time was important, he having 10 miles or so to go to Ganawa, the interview ended, as I had every reason to believe that the Khan was thoroughly frightened.

16. I at once arranged for a signal from the shore to be made by the Khan if he had caught the pirates, and then returned on board. The "Highflyer" and "Sphinx"

weighed at 2:30 p.m., and on seeing a flag hoisted on the port at Ganawa at about 3:30 p.m. anchored off that place at 4 p.m. I landed at once with Lieutenant Collins and Major Cox in a cutter manned and armed, picking up a cutter *en route* from "Sphinx" also manned and armed. We were received by the Khan on landing, and after a brief discussion two of the pirates were handed over to us, one pirate having escaped inland. We then proceeded on board, having seized the dhow belonging to the pirates.

17. I left the following morning, with "Sphinx" in company, for Bushire (the "Sphinx" towing the captured dhow), where I arrived at 11 a.m. (9th December). The pirates are now in cells (9th December) on board, and I have handed the dhow over to the custody of the Resident.

18. I beg to bring to your notice the valuable assistance given me by Major Cox, who came to join me at great personal inconvenience. I have no hesitation in saying that through his intimate knowledge of Persian Gulf affairs and its people, coupled with his invaluable advice, we were enabled to bring our search for the pirates to a successful conclusion.

I have already written to Major Cox thanking him for his services.

I would also bring to your notice, for the information of the Indian Government, the valuable assistance rendered by the Native Agent at Lingah, who obtained the necessary information secretly which led up to the eventual arrest of the pirates.

19. Commander Litchfield's hearty co-operation was also of the greatest assistance.

20. I beg to submit for your favourable consideration the attached list of expenses in connection with the search for and capture of the pirates, which money I have handed over to Major Cox for distribution, having first thoroughly discussed with him and agreed to the various charges as being reasonable. The services of the dhow for a week were absolutely necessary, as all information had to be obtained secretly. All the witnesses volunteered their services on promise of pecuniary reward, provided their identity was not revealed to any one, particularly to the pirates, as they feared retaliation from the latter in the event of their possible release or escape from the fate which I sincerely hope awaits them. The services of the Sayyid and nakhoda were of the greatest assistance. The nakhoda also piloted our boats into the Khors of Bandar Rig and Ganawa, which was no easy matter, particularly at the latter place.

21. I omitted to state that during my interview with the Khan of Bandar Rig he asked me how he would be rewarded if he captured the pirates and handed them over to me. I replied that his reward would be immediate, as in that case I should not have to resort to extreme measures; and I added, "If you comply with my demands" (to hand the pirates over before sunset that evening), "I will bring your good services to the favourable notice of the British Government, also your own." I trust that my assurances to him will meet with your approval, and that you will be pleased to forward them in the proper direction.

22. During my stay at Bushire I enjoyed the hospitality of the Resident there, and I was able to discuss the various matters in connection with the fate of the pirates. Many telegrams passed between the Resident, the Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, &c. Major Cox and I were fully agreed that, as these pirates are clearly so notorious all over the Gulf, and from the evidence we had of their guilt, we were fully justified in insisting on their immediate public execution at Bushire without further delay or discussion, and so promote maritime peace and our prestige all over the Gulf. However, after many telegrams had been exchanged, permission was obtained to hand the pirates over to the Sheikh of Mohammerah, and on the 15th December I transferred them to the "Sphinx," which ship, having embarked the Resident, left at 5 p.m. for Mohammerah, with orders to call at Koweit *en route*, as Major Cox wished to see the Sheikh of Koweit before going to Mohammerah. I ordered Commander Litchfield to place himself at the disposal of the Resident, and to comply with his requests as to the disposal of the pirates, and then to return to Bushire, and if possible to leave there in time to arrive at Kurrachee on the 27th, in accordance with your orders.

23. On the 12th December I received a telegram from the "Redbreast" at Muscat, saying: "Fifty-three Afghans had arrived there to buy arms and ammunition. The Sultan refuses to allow them to remain, and a British Indian steamer has refused to take them to Kurrachee. Consul asks me to do so. Am I to comply?" I fully discussed the matter with Major Cox, and I pointed out to him that, except under very urgent circumstances, I did not consider that a man-of-war should be called on to do such duties, and I telegraphed to the "Redbreast": "... Suggest Afghans should be dispatched in a dhow, or detained by Sultan and sent in batches by mail-steamer. In any case I required further details as to urgency before sanctioning 'Redbreast' being used," as I did not consider (1) that a man-of-war should be used; (2) that a gun-boat was a

suitable ship to employ. On the following day (13th) I received the following reply from Lieutenant and Commander Hose of "Redbreast": "... Consul informs me Sultan unable to detain Afghans. Consul fears disturbances at any time now quarantine is finished. Deportation in dhows impossible. If Afghans break or are allowed out of quarantine station to await next mail, arms and ammunition will be purchased, and further arrangements will be made for their transport to the Makran Coast."

Major Cox also received a telegram from Major Grey, saying that "Senior Naval Officer demurs at my request to send Afghans in 'Redbreast'; please urge him to give necessary orders," or words to that effect. I then wired to "Redbreast": "... Difficult to understand why Sultan cannot detain fifty unarmed men in his forts pending expulsion; but if, after communication with Consul, their immediate expulsion is urgent, you are to comply with his request. 'Lapwing' left Jask to-day for Muscat." To which "Redbreast" replied: "... Consul considers immediate deportation absolutely necessary. Leaving for Kurrachee."

24. I trust that my action (of which I informed you by wire) in this matter has met with your approval, for I fully realize my responsibilities and those of the Commanding Officer of "Redbreast" in allowing such a large number of Afghans (probably truculent) to be embarked on board a gun-boat. However, as Lieutenant and Commander Hose did not protest as to the possibility of taking the Afghans in "Redbreast," I gave him an order to comply with the request of the Consul.

25. While at Bushire, "Highflyer" attempted to coal on three consecutive days, but the weather made it impossible until the third day (Sunday, 15th), when I received 180 tons with difficulty, and sailed that day for Shargah, where the Resident had asked me to call with a view to sending a letter to the Native Agent there, and also to show the flag, which the Resident assured me would stiffen the Sheikh's back in connection with the oxide mine at Abu Musa Island, with which circumstances I understand that you are acquainted.

I arrived off Shargah on the morning of the 17th December, and, having heard that the Native Agent there was ill, I sent a letter from the Resident on shore, and sailed shortly afterwards for Muscat, where I arrived at 9:30 a.m. on the 18th and coaled, receiving 180 tons.

27. The Royal Indian Mail steam-ship "Lawrence" arrived on the 18th December with the Agent to the Viceroy and Governor-General in Baluchistan (Sir Henry McMahon), on whom I called. Sir Henry returned my call the following forenoon, and was saluted on leaving "Highflyer" with thirteen guns. I left for Bombay at noon that day (19th), having ordered "Sphinx" to resume the duties of Senior Naval Officer in the Persian Gulf.

28. During my short stay at Muscat I discussed with Major Grey the question of the Afghans who had been taken to Kurrachee in "Redbreast," and Major Grey informed me that the principal reason for not detaining the Afghans in custody at Muscat was that they had not committed themselves in any way in coming to or since their arrival at Muscat, as they had stated that they did not know that Muscat was closed to them. Major Grey told me that ignorance on that point would not be accepted in the future, and that any steamer bringing Afghans to Muscat would have to take them away or transfer them to another ship for that purpose. I submit for your favourable consideration that the British India Steam-ship Company may be informed of existing conditions at Muscat, with a view to their not taking Afghans there, and so avoid further complications and the necessity of His Majesty's ships being called on to carry out expulsion duties, which "Redbreast" recently had done. Whether disturbances would have taken place at Muscat if the fifty-three Afghans had been allowed in the town I do not know, but I think that His Highness the Sultan should be prepared to deal with any disturbances in Muscat caused by fifty unarmed men.

30. "Highflyer" arrived at Bombay at 7 a.m. this day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. S. HICKLEY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 94.

LIST of Expenses incurred in connection with the Capture of the Pirates by His Majesty's Ship "Highflyer" on December 8, 1907.

Particulars.	Rupees.	Remarks.
Hire of a dhow for one week	350	
Reward to Seyyid of Dayir	130	
Reward to nakhoda of Dayir	80	
Reward to two witnesses from Koweit	60	} Witnesses for identification.
Reward to Seedie from Lingah	30	
Total	650	

(Signed) C. S. HICKLEY, Captain.

Inclosure 4 in No. 94.

Commander Litchfield to Commander-in-chief, East Indies.

(Confidential.)

Sir, "Sphinx," at Henjam, November 29, 1907.
IN continuation of my general letter of the 3rd November, 1907, I have the honour to report that I left Bushire at 1:30 P.M. on the 5th November, arrived at the outer buoy, Shatt-al-Arab, at 8:15 A.M. the 6th November, and proceeded up the river to Mohammerah. In the afternoon I called upon His Majesty's Consul, who returned my call next morning. He could give me no recent news of the Humaidi pirate gang, but when last heard of they were still at Dayir.

2. I proceeded up the river to Bussorah early on the 8th November, mooring off the Consulate at 10 A.M.

I found the Turkish cruiser "Key of the Ocean" and Royal Imperial Majesty's gun-boat "Comet" there, the latter having lately returned from Ahwaz. Ships were dressed in honour of the national festival which celebrates the conclusion of Ramadan. I dressed ship upon anchoring. There was some difficulty in obtaining pratique, the quarantine officer at first imposed two days' quarantine, owing to the ship having been to Muscat within the last month. I was, however, able to persuade him to grant us pratique in the afternoon.

His Majesty's Consul was away at Bagdad. I notified the Wali and Commodore of my intention to dress ship next morning in honour of the birthday of His Majesty the King, and that I would call upon them early.

3. On the 9th November I dressed ship in honour of His Majesty's birthday, and paid an early call upon the Wali and Commodore. The Turkish cruiser "Comet" and most of the steamers in the port also dressed.

The Wali and Commodore duly returned my call later in the day, and offered felicitations upon the occasion we were celebrating. The port officer also called.

In the absence of His Majesty's Consul, who usually holds a reception on this day, I invited the British community off to the ship to honour His Majesty's health.

4. The ship coaled on the 12th November, 135 tons of coal being obtained from Messrs. Strick and Co., the only firm able to supply me, the price arranged was 31 rupees 14 annas per ton, which is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ rupees cheaper than Government rate at Bushire.

The coal, however, though demanded as Welsh and described on the supply note as North Welsh, proved to be of an inferior quality, and is certainly not best Welsh steam coal. I have written to Messrs. Strick and Co. with regard to the matter.

5. I proceeded to Mohammerah on the 13th to await the arrival of the mail conveying Mr. O'Keefe, Chief Artificer Engineer, one A.B., and two lascars, and thus avoid the five days' quarantine that would have been imposed had I received these passengers from the mail at Bussorah.

I would suggest that naval passengers for ships in the river be in all cases booked to Mohammerah.

On the 14th I went with His Majesty's Consul to visit Sheikh Khazal. He had had no recent news of the pirates, who appear to have laid low at Dayir since the attack on the Koweit dhow in February, and he assumed that they were still at Dayir.

I had intended to go down to Fao for a few days, but Mr. McDouall informed me that the majority of the dhows had cleared for the south on the 11th and 12th, and that he saw no immediate necessity for a ship near the bar. I therefore returned to Bussorah on the 15th, and found that Mr. Crow, His Majesty's Consul, had returned.

It was arranged that Sheikh Khazal should return my call when I next visited Mohammerah, as he was suffering from a cold and his launch was under repairs.

6. Mr. Crow informed me that a strong protest had been made to the Porte by His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, with reference to the uncivil treatment of the Commanding Officer of "Lapwing" at Katif. The Wali of Bussorah had been instructed to inquire into the matter, with a view to the punishment of the offending officials.

Mr. Crow informed me that a shortage of dates of some kinds had resulted in high prices, and that consequently the number of dhows returning to the river for the second date season about the middle of December might be expected to be less than usual.

8. On the 20th November I was informed that the Sheikh of Zubeir, a town about 10' west of Bussorah, had been murdered with two of his people that afternoon in the bazaar at Bussorah. The Turkish troops were called out to quell the disturbance which followed.

9. On the 21st November, at 4:50 P.M., I received your telegram directing me to proceed to Koweit to obtain men who can identify the Humaidi pirates and afterwards proceed to Bushire to place myself under the orders of the "Highflyer."

My proceedings subsequent to the receipt of your telegram have been reported to Captain Hickley, of His Majesty's ship "Highflyer," who has relieved me as Senior Officer in the Gulf upon joining him at Henjam this day. A copy of that letter is attached.

10. The telegraphic communication with Bussorah by land lines proved to be more efficient than I was led to believe, but it appears to be subject to temporary interruptions, due to weather or Arabs cutting the wire.

Your telegram No. 55, consisting of fifty-seven groups, came through in about thirty hours, with only two slight errors.

The line was interrupted very soon afterwards on account of heavy rain in the north, and I am doubtful whether you received my acknowledgment before the report of my arrival at Bushire.

11. As regards the movements of the other ships of the division, "Lapwing" left Bunder Abbas at 5 P.M., 24th October, and arrived at Muscat early on the 26th October, where she embarked Major Grey, and left for Sur the same evening.

Major Grey was unable to trace the Somali arms he went to Sur to find, and "Lapwing" returned to Muscat on the 28th October.

Between the 28th October and the 5th November some urgent defects in engine-room were made good, and on the 6th November I ordered her to Kurrachee to clean boilers and generally overhaul her machinery.

She arrived on the 9th, and returned to Muscat on the 27th, with orders to leave for the north on the 28th, in readiness to relieve me in the river.

Owing, however, to the Resident's request for a second ship on the arms traffic as soon as possible, she has been temporarily diverted to assist "Redbreast" on this service.

12. I left "Redbreast" at Bushire on the 5th November, with orders to embark Mr. Bill, First Assistant to the Resident, and convey him to Abu Musa and Ras-al-Khaima, afterwards proceeding to Muscat.

The object of the Abu Musa visit was to see if all was quiet there, and to reassure the Sheikh's people.

It, however, transpired that the Sheikh's guard had vacated the island, and the "Redbreast" proceeded to Shargah, where Mr. Bill obtained a promise from the Sheikh to send over a fresh guard at once.

Mr. Brown, the German Agent, has been in Bushire interviewing the German Consul about the Abu Musa Concession, and has also, I understand, been endeavouring to frighten the Sheikh of Shargah.

At Ras-al-Khaima it was found that the slave-dealer referred to in paragraph 5 of

my letter of the 14th October had returned to Khabura, and I understand that, being once more in the territory of the Sultan of Muscat, His Highness is to be requested to cause his arrest.

13. "Redbreast" arrived at Muscat on the 15th November, her orders being to assist Political Agent in any further steps to be taken with regard to the Somali arms, and then to proceed to the Mekran Coast for the suppression of the arms traffic.

She left Muscat for Sur on the 16th to make further inquiries about Somali arms reported to be located there, but returned to Muscat without success on the 18th.

"Redbreast" visited Sur again, with Major Grey, on the 24th. Major Grey had obtained authority from the Sultan to forcibly seize the arms which has been located in a house at West Sur, but it was found that the Mullah's agents had got away for Ras-al-Khail, Somaliland, three days previously with 400 rifles.

The affair is now closed for this year, so far as this division is concerned. "Redbreast's" report states that Political Agent wired to the Resident at Aden notifying the departure of the arms for Ras-al-Khail.

14. I told Lieutenant and Commander Hose to make the best arrangements he could with Mr. New for the supply of information as to the movements of arms runners.

15. There appears to be considerable keenness for signalling in the British India and Strick steamers, and some ships have a very fair efficiency. They seldom lose an opportunity of exercise when we fall in with them.

16. I regret to report two cases of beri-beri. The first developed the day I left Bushire, the 5th November, the patient being an able seaman.

As neither of the medical officers of "Sphinx" or "Redbreast" had previously seen a case of beri-beri, I obtained the services of Captain Williams, I.M.S., attached to the Residency, to confirm their diagnosis and advise as to treatment.

I was advised to keep the man on board, as he would thus have a better chance, especially in view of the change of climate to be expected in the river.

The man has been accommodated in a canvas house on the upper deck and has progressed satisfactorily.

I had all the rice on board examined, and some doubtful-looking rice in the canteen, the only rice stowed forward, thrown overboard.

That rice had not, however, been issued.

The mess deck and canteen were then disinfected.

No further cases occurred until the 24th instant, when a Lascar stoker serang was found to be suffering from the disease, and already in too critical a condition to be discharged from the ship had opportunity offered.

With the exception of a few cases of fever, the health of the officers and men is otherwise very good.

I have, &c.

(Signed) SHIRLEY LITCHFIELD,

Commander and Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf Division.

Inclosure 5 in No. 94.

Commander Litchfield to Captain Hickley.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

"Sphinx," at Henjam, November 29, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report my proceedings since receiving Commander-in-chief's telegram at 4:50 P.M. on the 21st November, directing me to proceed to Koweit and obtain through the Political Agent some of Sheikh Mubarek's men who can identify the piratical gang of Abdullah-bin-Humaidi, and afterwards proceed to Bushire to find instructions as to a rendezvous with you.

2. I left Bussorah at 11 A.M. the 22nd November, with the object of catching the midnight tide over the bar and crossing the bar should the moon serve. I arrived at Fao 7:45 P.M., and anchored to wait for the rise of the tide.

At 11 P.M., the time I should have proceeded, the moon was obscured by heavy clouds, which showed no signs of dispersing, and there was insufficient light for picking up the buoys. I therefore decided to wait for the next day tide.

3. At 11 A.M. on the 23rd November I proceeded across the bar, and anchored at Koweit in the inner anchorage at 8:45 P.M., the moon rising just in time to enable me to pick up the buoys.

4. As it would be too late to interview the Sheikh that night, I deferred landing until 7 A.M. the next morning, the 24th November, when I called upon Major Knox, Political Agent, and went with him to see Sheikh Jabir, eldest son of Sheikh Mubarek, who was unfortunately away hunting in the interior, and could not be communicated with without delaying my departure some days.

Sheikh Jabir showed some hesitation to act in his father's absence, but finally consented to send with me two men who could recognize the piratical sons of Abdullah-bin-Humaidi.

The names of these Koweit men are Hussein-bin-Bathir and Akbir-bin-Mahomed. They are both of Persian extraction, born and brought up in Koweit, and are seamen by profession.

They last saw the sons of Abdullah-bin-Humaidi in Bussorah and Mohammerah about four years ago, but say they can easily recognize them. They would not, however, be prepared to identify the pirate's crew. It appears that the crew is constantly changed, a fresh one being collected for each expedition.

Sheikh Jabir said that he knew of no one in Koweit who could identify the pirate's crew, or who had local knowledge of Dayir. The two men I have brought have been to Dayir, but have not landed there.

I could obtain no definite information as to the present whereabouts of the pirates, but when last heard of they were reported to be at Dayir.

5. When at Mohammerah, a few days before receiving Commander-in-chief's telegram, Sheikh Khazal and Mr. McDonall, His Majesty's Consul, gave me similar information. Neither had received any recent news of the movements of the pirates. Sheikh Khazal thought they would probably be still at Dayir.

6. Having embarked the two Koweit men, I left Koweit at 2:30 P.M., and arrived and anchored off Bushire at 1:30 P.M. the 25th November. I landed as soon as pratique was obtained to see the Resident, and called at the telegraph station on the way, finding your first telegram from Henjam awaiting me, and that you happened to be in the office at Henjam. After communicating with you I went on to see the Resident, who expressed his readiness to accompany me in accordance with your desire, provided I would wait till after the arrival of the mail on the 27th.

The Resident suggested that it would be desirable to visit Lingah as a first step to obtain further information from the Native Agent there as to the present whereabouts of the pirate, and of the boy Ali-bin-Ibrahim, the sole survivor of the massacred crew of the Persian dhow, and also a man familiar with the country around Dayir.

7. Having replied to your telegram I proceeded to the inner anchorage early on the 26th November to complete with coal, receiving 50 tons.

8. At 4:30 P.M. on the 27th November, having embarked the Resident and bakers for "Highflyer," I sailed for Lingah and Henjam, bringing with me also your mails, which arrived that morning. I instructed the postmaster to retain mails for "Highflyer" and "Sphinx" at Bushire until further orders.

9. I arrived at Lingah 7:15 A.M. this morning.

The Native Agent came off immediately, and Major Cox explained our business. The Agent said that the man who could give us the most assistance was a Persian Seyyid named Abdul Qahir, who had gone over to Basidu on behalf of the Governor of Lingah to escort the Mullah, who was recently banished by the Deiya Begi and took refuge at Basidu, but was now permitted to return to Lingah.

The Seyyid and his party were expected to return to Lingah to-day. To avoid waste of time in waiting for the Seyyid I decided to proceed to Basidu, and speak any native craft I met on the way. I weighed at 8:20 A.M., and after proceeding 10' eastward fell in with the dhow containing the Seyyid.

The Native Agent was sent on board the dhow and brought back the Seyyid.

10. The Seyyid was quite willing to accompany us, and appears to be very keen on the punishment of the pirates.

He is a resident of Dayir, and his people know the houses in which the pirates and their relatives live at Batunah, about 6' west of Dayir. He can procure local guides at Dayir, and the relatives of the massacred crew of the "Shivoh" dhow who live at Dayir. The only survivor of that piracy, Ali-bin-Ibrahim, could be procured as a witness at Shivoh.

11. The Seyyid returned from a visit to Bushire by last mail. Just before he left he met a Dayir man, who told him that the pirates had recently bought a dhow and proceeded to Bussorah. The Seyyid, however, is inclined to doubt the reliability of this information, as the people of the Dashti Coast are naturally disposed to disclaim connection with the pirates, which gives their district an unenviable reputation.

12. I then proceeded at 10:20 A.M. direct for Henjam to communicate with you and report progress. The Native Agent subsequently informed the Resident that there is a Seedie at Lingah who at one time was a slave in the house of the pirates.

It may be useful to pick this man up at Lingah on the way north.

13. I have two cases of beri-beri on board, one being a European.

I have, &c.

(Signed) SHIRLEY LITCHFIELD.

Inclosure 6 in No. 94.

Commander Litchfield to Commander-in-chief, East Indies.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

"Sphinx," at Henjam, November 29, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward the attached reports from the Commanding Officer, His Majesty's ship "Redbreast," with reference to services undertaken at the request of Political Officers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) SHIRLEY LITCHFIELD,

Commander and Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf Division.

Inclosure 7 in No. 94.

Lieutenant-Commander Hose to Commander Litchfield.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

"Redbreast," at Muscat, November 18, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following Report on the various matters in connection with which I carried Mr. Bill, First Assistant Resident, to Abu Musa, and to ports on the Trucial Oman Coast, in accordance with your sailing orders of the 5th November, 1907.

2. I left Bushire at 2 P.M. on the 7th instant, and arrived at Abu Musa on the 9th. On landing with Mr. Bill we found that the Sheikh of Shargah had established no guard on the island, that several utensils for the working of the oxide were still there, and a heap of oxide piled near the beach containing by approximate measurement 200 tons. At Mr. Bill's request I sent the armourer and carpenter's mate ashore to take a cart to pieces, and also landed a flagstaff to enable the Sheikh of Shargah to hoist his flag over the oxide works.

3. Leaving Abu Musa at 6 P.M., I arrived at Shargah at 9:30 the same evening, and at 8 A.M. the following day landed with Mr. Bill, who interviewed the Sheikh in the British Residency's Native Agent's house. After many difficulties had been put in the way and excuses made by the Sheikh, Mr. Bill eventually got him to promise to send a guard to Abu Musa forthwith, and I kept the ship at Shargah until the party were seen to start at daylight on the 11th; then embarking Issa-bin-Abdul Atif (the Native Agent's son), I proceeded to Umm-al-Kawain and anchored off the place at 8:45 A.M.

4. The object of Mr. Bill's visit to Umm-al-Kawain was to obtain from the Sheikh the release of a Somali slave whom he had bought from Oman. Mr. Bill and I landed immediately after anchoring, but on getting ashore we were informed that the Sheikh was out hunting. However, messengers were sent after him, and we waited till 11:30, by which time Mr. Bill considered the Sheikh ought certainly to have returned. Not having done so, Mr. Bill and I went back to the ship, leaving Issa-bin-Abdul Atif on shore with a message from the former to the Sheikh that he must repair on board the "Redbreast" on his return, also that he must bring the slave with him or he would not be received. At 2 P.M. the Sheikh arrived on board with the slave, and full of apologies for his inability to get back to his house in time to see Mr. Bill there. The Sheikh surrendered the slave, and left the ship at 3 P.M., upon which I gave him the authorized salute of three guns.

5. As it was then too late to reach Ras-al-Khaima before dark, I remained at Umm-al-Kawain till 5 A.M. the next day (12th), and reached Ras-al-Khaima at 9:30 A.M. I landed with Mr. Bill and Issa-bin-Abdul Atif, the latter proceeding into the town to make inquiries re a Beluchi, called Ghulam Shah, a slave dealer, who was believed to have been in the place a short time previously, if not there then. Inquiries elicited the

information that Ghulam Shah had left Ras-al-Khaima, and the Sheikh made the same statement to Mr. Bill, telling him he had gone to Ali Fujaira on the Ash Shemailya Coast.

6. I left Ras-al-Khaima at 8 P.M. and proceeded to Bundar Abbas, in order that Mr. Bill might catch the slow mail for Bushire and forward a report by her to the Resident. Having dispatched the report by the steamer on the morning of the 13th, I proceeded with Mr. Bill to Al Fujaira, where I anchored at 7 A.M. the 14th. At 8:30 we landed, and the Sheikh met us on the beach. He informed Mr. Bill that Ghulam Shah had been at Fujaira, had gone to Ras-al-Khaima, had then returned to Fujaira, but had left again five days previously for Al Khabura, on the Batineh Coast. He promised to retain Ghulam Shah for the Political Resident's disposal should Ghulam Shah return.

7. I left Fujaira at noon for Muscat, where I arrived at 7 A.M. the 15th, and disembarked Mr. Bill.

I have, &c.

(Signed) WALTER HOSE.

Inclosure 8 in No. 94.

Lieutenant-Commander Hose to Commander Litchfield.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

"Redbreast," at Muscat, November 19, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that on my arrival at Muscat on the 15th instant I was requested by the Political Agent to embark the Agency dragoman and proceed to Sur, and make investigations re the arrival there of an agent of the Mad Mullah, named Hamed-bin-Shirwa, with a consignment of rifles for final transport to Somaliland.

2. In accordance with this request, I left Muscat at 10 P.M., the 16th, and arrived at Sur at daylight on the 17th. I landed at 7:30 with the Agency dragoman, Saïd Mahommed, and, with my interpreter, Hadji Abdullah, I went first to see the Hindoo Banyan Geviam, who had sent the news of the arrival of Hamed-bin-Shirwa at Sur, and was told by him that the "Somali" had sailed that morning about 3 A.M. On being pressed for proof of this, he produced several witnesses, whose evidence, however, seemed somewhat contradictory. Still, the majority of the evidence was in favour of his having sailed, and that, taken with the Banyan's positive assurances of the fact, induced me to get away in chase, since, if the statement was true, it was of the utmost importance to get away without delay; and, if it were false, any other inquiries concerning Hamed could be prosecuted on my return.

3. I got away at 10:15 and proceeded full speed round Ras-al-Hadd, and at 2 P.M. overhauled four bedans which I stopped and boarded. It turned out that these had left Sur at 7 A.M., and consequently it seemed impossible that if Hamed had left Sur at 3 A.M., as stated by Geiram, that I could overhaul him before dark; also, the nakhodas and crews of bedans said they had seen Hamed's boat in the Khor at Sur the previous evening, and were inclined to think he had not sailed before them that morning. On this I determined to return to Sur, and got there at 5 P.M. I then landed again with Saïd Mahommed and Hadji Abdullah and interviewed Geiram a second time. He informed me that he had ascertained positively in the meantime that Hamed's bedan was still in the Khor; that he had started out that morning, but the sight of the "Redbreast" had driven him in again. The latter part of this statement I found to be absolutely untrue when I saw the unprepared state of the bedan for any voyage. I went to her after leaving the "Banyan." She was entirely empty, and was lying alongside another Somali boat two-thirds laden with rice and dates. The owner and nakhoda of this boat, a Somali named Mahmud Mahommed, appeared on the scene and claimed ownership to Hamed's boat as well, saying he bought her from Salah-bin-Sheikh, of Sur, a few days ago. I had the cargo of Mahmud's boat (sambuk) overhauled, but found nothing suspicious.

4. After my examination of the boats I went to visit Sheikh Abdullah-bin-Salim, who assured me he had come from Jaalan to Sur entirely over this arms running affair, and had issued orders to the effect that none of his people were to countenance it or to allow any arms to leave the place. He was leaving Sur again the next day, but promised to leave some one to see his orders carried out.

5. While with Sheikh Abdullah a man called Jumma-bin-[-] arrived, and told Saïd Mahommed that Hamed-bin-Shirwa had imported 400 rifles into Sur, and now had them hidden in the house of one Nasr-bin-Khamis, in West Sur; that Hamed had

intended leaving Sur before this, but had been detained by the illness of Nasr-bin-Khamis, and that they proposed sailing together in two days or so; that their destination was Ras-al-Khail on the Somali Coast; that Hamed had bought the bedan from Salah-bin-Shaikh for 200 rupees, but in the name of Mahmud Mahomed and not his own.

6. I debated whether to search Nasr-bin-Khamis' house, but decided to consult the Political Agent first, since there would be time to return again for this purpose, and it seemed perhaps advisable to have some representative of the Sultan (or some authority from him) if possible, to accompany one in such a proceeding.

7. I left Sur at 9 P.M., 17th, arriving at Muscat the following morning at 8 o'clock.

The Sultan being absent from Muscat, the Political Agent has not thought it advisable to take any further proceedings with regard to searching the house of Nasr-bin-Khamis

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER HOSE.

Inclosure 9 in No. 94.

Lieutenant-Commander Hose to Commander Litchfield.

(Confidential.)

Sir, "Redbreast," at Muscat, November 25, 1907.

IN continuation of my report on the Mad Mullah's agent, Hamed-bin-Shirwa, I have the honour to submit the following:—

2. On the 22nd instant I was requested by the Political Agent to convey him to Sur, as he had obtained an order from His Highness the Sultan of Muscat to the Sheikh of Sur to hand over Hamed-bin-Shirwa to him.

3. I left Muscat with Major Grey on board at 4 A.M. (24th), and arrived at Sur at noon.

4. Major Grey, on landing, received information that Hamed-bin-Shirwa had left Sur three days beforehand.

5. I left Sur at 8 P.M. the same evening, and returned to Muscat with Major Grey, who is informing the Resident at Aden by wire of the Somali's departure for Ras-al-Khail.

I have, &c.
(Signed) WALTER HOSE.

[2408]

No. 95.

Messrs. Ellinger and Co. to Foreign Office.—(Received January 22.)

Sir, 28, Oxford Street, Manchester, January 20, 1908.

WE are in receipt of yours of the 18th instant acknowledging our letter of the 20th ultimo with reference to the formation of a Limited Liability Company for the purpose of buying from the Moin-ut-Tujar all the red oxide from the Island of Ormuz.

We are glad to note that His Majesty's Government agree to give the assurances we asked for in our letter of the 20th ultimo.

With reference to the concluding paragraph of your letter, we are showing your letter to our solicitors, Messrs. E. F. Turner and Sons, 115, Leadenhall Street, London, to which course you have already agreed. Before showing your letter under reply to any other person we shall obtain the approval of His Majesty's Government.

We are advising Messrs. E. F. Turner and Sons that we show them your letter of the 18th instant for their information only, and we are informing them of the engagement into which we have entered with His Majesty's Government as regards showing the letter to other persons.

We are, &c.
(Signed) ELLINGER AND CO.

[2454]

No. 96.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)

(No. 15.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, January 22, 1908.

MY telegram No. 12 of the 20th instant.

Financial Adviser in Persia.

M. Isvolsky informs me that he has instructed M. de Nelidow by telegraph to concert with Sir F. Bertie in requesting French Minister for Foreign Affairs to communicate to British and Russian Governments the text of the instructions to be given to M. Bizot, as he had already promised to do so. M. Isvolsky adds that the instructions should comprise an obligation on M. Bizot to conform his financial activity to the suggestions of the British and Russian Representatives at Tehran, and his Excellency hopes that this will be clearly understood at Paris.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[2455]

No. 97.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 22.)

(No. 16.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, January 22, 1908.

YOUR telegram No. 22 of yesterday.

Tureo-Persian frontier: Soujboulak incident.

M. Isvolsky had telegraphed to Constantinople to ascertain Russian Ambassador's views. On receipt of news of ultimatum, which it is alleged Turkish Commissioner presented, M. Zinoview had already written to Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, pointing out that the action of the Turkish military authorities was entirely contradictory to Porte's assurances. Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs had stated that Ottoman Government were not responsible for effervescence among the Kurdish tribes who had been incensed by incendiarism of some of their villages by Persian Governor-General, but his Excellency had promised to do what he could to avert complications.

In informing me of above, M. Isvolsky expressed the hope that Sir N. O'Connor would support representations of Russian Ambassador, if he has not already done so.

(Sent to Constantinople and Tehran.)

[1792]

No. 98.

Foreign Office to India Office.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 22, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 18th December, 1907, relative to the capture of the Dayir pirates, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit herewith, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* from which it appears that, in informing the Persian Government of the proposed destruction by one of His Majesty's ships of the strongholds of the Chief of the Dashti at Dayir and Kangun, he omitted to state in accordance with Major Cox's proposal that the above course would only be resorted to should the Chief fail to comply with a demand for a sum of 15,000 rupees to be distributed among the victims of the pirates.

It will also be observed that the Persian Government decline the assistance of His Majesty's Government in the matter, but assert their willingness to undertake the destruction of the strongholds themselves.

Sir E. Grey is disposed to agree with Mr. Marling that the more forcible measure will produce a better moral effect, and, subject to Mr. Morley's concurrence, he proposes to inform him that he need take no steps to correct the mistake.

He further proposes, if Mr. Morley sees no objection, to approve Mr. Marling's proposed intimation to the Persian Government that one of His Majesty's ships will

watch the operations and that the Officer in Command has instructions to complete the work if not carried out to his satisfaction.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[2550]

No. 99.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 23.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 12th December, relative to the relations of the Sheikh of Mohammerah with the Sheikh of Koweit.

India Office, January 22, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 99.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Sir,

Bushire, November 10, 1907.

WITH reference to the correspondence ending with Government of India letter dated the 17th October, 1907, I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, a copy of communication, addressed by His Britannic Majesty's Consul at Mohammerah to His Majesty's Representative at Tehran, on the subject of the Sardar Arfa's relations with Sheikh Mubarek of Koweit.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. Z. COX.

Inclosure 2 in No. 99.

Consul McDouall to Mr. Marling.

(No. 11. Confidential.)

Sir,

Mohammerah, October 12, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward the following Memorandum of a confidential conversation with the Sardar Arfa for your information:—

The Sardar Arfa asked if I had seen the Tehran papers, especially the "Maref," which had been making all sorts of false statements about him and his relations with ourselves and with Sheikh Mubarek. As to the latter, as I knew, the two families had always been on most intimate terms, and, considering the large number of Persians, traders, and others at Koweit, it was in the interests of the Persian Government that such should be the case.

I said that I knew that, and I did not think the statements of newspapers would have much effect on the Persian Government.

The subject of the reckless mis-statements published in Persian papers had been discussed in the Majlis. He said that there ought to be some way of rebutting them, and I replied that no doubt when the Majlis had passed the various Nizamnamas this would be arranged.

He said that under a Constitutional Government he hoped that a proper recognition of his position would be made and allowances given for expenditure on frontier matters and the policing of the Shatt-el-Arab, now paid out of his own pocket, but he was afraid that the Majlis would wish to further reduce his power and that we would support them, as in the case of the customs, which he only accepted on our advice. Although the British had not left him without hope, they had not given him the promises when he would have liked.

I said that I hoped the Majlis would gradually arrange everything in accordance with the usual regulation of Constitutional Governments, which would naturally include the expenditure on frontier and police matters. As to ourselves, His Majesty's Government, according to Reuter's telegrams, had taken the opportunity of the

Anglo-Russian Agreement to reaffirm their previous declaration as to the Persian Gulf and to state that they held to the policy of preserving the *status quo* there.

He said that this year he had spent a large sum on the Beni Iruf business. The Beni Iruf were a tribe on the Turkish frontier, and their then Sheikh had several times been a refugee in Turkish territory and was suspected of having to a certain extent relations with the Turks. This tribe has for many years only paid taxes under compulsion. He was left in charge of the province, a frontier one, without a single Persian soldier. The tribe rebelled and he raised a sufficient force to overawe them. They attacked his forces and lost a few men killed, as did he, and then submitted without his occupying their villages. The late Atabeg refused to sanction any payment to him on account of this expenditure, and said that the Majlis were not pleased at his using force, and that he would pay himself out of the loot he had taken. As a fact, he had taken none. The few sheep taken were returned to the tribe when they submitted. He had also been attacked in the papers for attacking so inoffensive a tribe as the Beni Iruf. Now Dizful and Shushter were in disorder; but after this treatment he was not going to interfere in their affairs, as he would only get into trouble with the Majlis by doing so.

I said that this was nothing new in Persia; others had been treated the same. Constitutional Government was still in its infancy, and it would take some time for the Majlis to reorganize the whole system. When that was done we might hope for a better system.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. McDOWALL.

[2589]

No. 100.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, January 23, 1908.

MR. MARLING'S No. 26 of to-day's date.

I do not anticipate that any objection will be made on the part of the Russian Government to effecting exchange of telegraph lines; and I believe M. Isvolsky is inclined to leave manner in which Persian Government are to be approached on the subject to the decision of the British and Russian Representatives at Tehran.

The arrangement was treated here as a matter apart; there was no intention of regarding it as secret, but it was not considered as coming within the scope of the Convention.

I will speak to M. Isvolsky if you desire.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[2533]

No. 101.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 26.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 23, 1908.

BEST way of obtaining assent of Persian Government to exchange of telegraph lines will, I think, be to represent transaction, not as a complement of Anglo-Russian Agreement, but as one upon which the two Governments have agreed merely as a matter of convenience.

Persian Government have been given verbal assurances that Convention contains no secret clauses; it will be believed that other secret arrangements exist if we now have to inform them that proposed exchange formed part of it, and the result would be to arouse damaging suspicions of our good faith.

M. de Hartwig is inclined to agree and think carrying out of exchange on these lines possible.

Is there any objection, in your opinion?

[2582]

No. 102.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 27.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 23, 1908.

FRONTIER. Please see Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 16 of the 22nd instant. That action of Kurds is solely due to Turks is indicated by all the evidence I have.

[2588]

No. 103.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 23.)

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 23, 1908.

M. PRIEM'S contract has been terminated by Persian Government, and he seems to be making preparations to go.

Reference is to your telegram No. 221 of the 31st December, 1907.

[2454]

No. 104.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 13.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 23, 1908.

FINANCIAL Adviser to Persian Government.

You should make representations to M. Pichon, in concert with your Russian colleague, in the sense indicated by Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs to Sir A. Nicolson.

See telegram No. 15 from St. Petersburg of yesterday.

[2455]

No. 105.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 23, 1908.

SOUBBOULAK incident on Turco-Persian frontier.

You should make representations to the Porte in support of those made by your Russian colleague.

Reference is to yesterday's telegram No. 16 from St. Petersburg.

[2601]

No. 106.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 24.)

(No. 30.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 19, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 28 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to submit herewith translation of an official communiqué which has been made to the local press in regard to the redistribution of the Russian troops on the Persian frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 106.

Extract from the "Petersburger Zeitung" of January 6 (19), 1908.

(Translation.)

THE Petersburg Telegraph Agency reports as follows in regard to the reported concentration of troops on the Russo-Persian frontier:—

During the last few days the report has been spread not only in Tehran but also abroad that a considerable force of Russian troops had been concentrated on the Persian frontier at Julfa.

The report is untrue. In point of fact there are in the Russian district of Julfa, the chief point on the trade route between Transcaucasia and Azerbaijan, but six sotnias of the Uman Cossack regiment. This measure has as its object merely the protection of the Russian frontier, and, in case of need, the very natural and proper protection of the numberless Russian subjects and institutions in the neighbouring Persian territory, in which disorder continues unceasingly, as is seen by the recent murder of a courier of the Russian Consul at Urmia and the attempt on the life of the Russian Consul at Azerbaijan. In spite of these incidents no active military measures have been taken by Russia on the Persian frontier; the Cossack convoy only of the Consul-General at Tabreez has been increased for the protection of the Consulate and other Russian institutions in the town by twenty-five men.

[2683]

No. 107.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 24.)

(No. 4.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, January 24, 1908.

PERSTA. French Financial Adviser.

I have seen the Russian Ambassador on the subject of your telegram No. 13 of yesterday, and we shall probably have an opportunity to carry out our instructions to-morrow. I should, however, be glad to know to whom and by whom the promise (referred to in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 15 of the 22nd instant) was given that the French Government would communicate to the British and Russian Governments the text of the instructions to M. Bizot.

[2665]

No. 108.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 24.)

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 24, 1908.

YOUR telegram No. 13 of yesterday to Sir A. Nicolson and his No. 16 of the same date.

To-day I made representations on the same lines as the Russian Ambassador, and at his request to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I reminded of the repeated promises that Turkish troops would not encroach on Persian territory, and I requested that orders should at once be sent to the Turkish Commander to desist from his aggressive action and respect the territorial rights of Persia, if the reports of his aggressive action at Soujboulak should be confirmed.

His Excellency, as well as the Minister of War and the Grand Vizier, say that they know nothing either of alleged ultimatum or of the reported Turkish advance, but the Minister of War has telegraphed to the Military Commander to inquire, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs says that the Persian statements appear to him very improbable, as the fact that there is a Turkish Consul at Soujboulak shows that it is Persian territory.

I have repeated the above to St. Petersburg and Tehran.

[2681]

No. 109.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 24.)

(No. 29.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 24, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. Please see Sir N. O'Connor's telegram No. 17 of the 24th instant.

Acting Consul-General at Tabreez has received a letter, dated the 19th December, from a correspondent in Soujboulak, stating that Turkish Commander sent five zaptiehs, really to take possession of the town, though ostensibly to protect Ottoman Consulate, a few days after the Governor's departure on the 11th December; that the Karguzar and Customs officers were ordered out of the town on the 18th December by the

[1563]

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Turkish Consul; that two Turkish officers with fifteen soldiers arrived, and were lodged in the Custom-house buildings, on the 19th December; and that then the "real Governor of the town" was the Turkish Consul.

An account of the means which Turkish Commander employed to induce Kurdish Aghas to apply for Ottoman nationality is given in the same letter.

[2533]

No. 110.

Foreign Office to India Office.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 24, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, the accompanying copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran respecting the course to be followed with a view to obtain the consent of the Persian Government to the exchange with Russia of the control of the Tehran-Meshed and Meshed-Seistan telegraph lines.*

I am to state that, subject to Mr. Morley's concurrence, Sir E. Grey proposes to approve Mr. Marling's suggestion.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[2761]

No. 111.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 25.)

Sir,

India Office, January 24, 1908.

IN reply to your letter of the 31st ultimo, I am directed to state that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran should be instructed to approach the Persian Government with a view to obtaining the control of the Persian telegraph line between Ahwaz and Borazjoon for the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

A Minute on the subject by the Director-in-chief of the department is inclosed. Mr. Morley would suggest that the financial side of the question should be treated on the lines indicated therein, and that Mr. Marling should be instructed to include, unless he sees special reasons to the contrary, the Ahwaz-Mohammerah section of the line in the proposals to be submitted to the Persian Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 111.

Minute by Mr. Kirk.

WHEN the Persian Government are approached to allow the Indo-European Telegraph Department to repair and maintain the Persian telegraph line, I think it should be for the whole line Borazjoon-Ahwaz-Mohammerah, and not for the Borazjoon-Ahwaz section only. The first step to take would appear to be to find out if the Persian Government would agree to allow the Indo-European Telegraph Department to take charge of the line. It might be intimated to them as an inducement to do this that a telegraph engineer of the department would be sent out on the line with a small working party to try and effect immediate repairs. This officer would be able to report on the state of the line when he had gone over it. We should then know what was necessary to put the line in order and obtain an idea of the cost of doing this. As to the cost of the proposed survey of the line and its temporary repair as far as possible at the present time, seeing the great importance there is that the control of the line should be obtained, these charges could be paid by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, provided the Persian Government first agree to the general principle of giving the control of the line to the Indo-European Telegraph Department. Later,

when it was known what the thorough repair of the line and its maintenance afterwards were likely to cost, it would perhaps be the most suitable time to arrange with the Persian Government for the payment of some proportion of the charges. To obtain control of the line, it seems desirable to make the transfer of it as free from initial difficulties as possible for the Persian Government, who appear to want the use of an efficient line badly at the present time.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

January 3, 1908.

[2829]

No. 112.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 25.)

(No. 18.)

(Telegraphic) P.

Constantinople, January 25, 1908.

I HAVE received the following telegram, No. 7, dated yesterday, from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urumia:—

"The Persian Commissioner has heard from Solduz that the Kurds are discouraged and inclined to disperse, and that the Governor-General of Azerbaijan is holding his own at Soujboulak. Tahir Pasha says that the Turkish General has written to him to say that he wrote a friendly letter as an old acquaintance to the Governor-General advising him to retire from Soujboulak.

"In some more or less informal correspondence which continues between the Commissioners, Tahir maintains the Turkish claim roughly marked in Dervish Pasha's map, but does not quote the map. He has not yet come to Urumia, though he told me three days ago that he would do so. The Turkish Commission is now complete, but one member has, I hear, fallen ill."

[2830]

No. 113.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 25.)

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic) P.

Constantinople, January 25, 1908.

MR. MARLING'S telegram No. 30 of the 25th instant.

I am informed by the Porte that the Turkish Commander has replied to their inquiries admitting that he had sent a written summons to the Prince Governor calling on him to desist from punitive measures against Sunni Kurds, such as burning their villages, &c., as such action might arouse their fanaticism and lead to untoward incidents. The Turkish Commander has been severely reprimanded for doing this, and he has also been asked to furnish his explanations as to the dispatch of soldiers and gendarmes, reported in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 29 of the 24th instant, which he is reminded would be contrary to the instructions he has received to refrain from aggressive acts.

Above sent to Tehran and St. Petersburg.

[2771]

No. 114.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 25.)

(No. 30.)

(Telegraphic) P.

Tehran, January 25, 1908.

FRONTIER. Please see my telegram No. 29 of yesterday.

I am informed by Minister for Foreign Affairs that Mohammed Fazl Pasha, the Turkish Commander, is within 11 miles of Soujboulak, and that Turkish Commissioner has admitted authenticity of his letters (which were communicated to latter by Persian Commissioner), warning Firman Firma against entering town, and later summoning him to evacuate it.

[2683]

No. 115.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 25, 1908.

INSTRUCTIONS to Financial Adviser in Persia.

Please refer to your telegram No. 4 of yesterday.

No record can be found here of a promise by the French to communicate the text to the Russians and to us, and you should not refer to it unless M. de Nélidoff has proof that it was made. You should, however, join him in asking for such a communication.

[2589]

No. 116.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 25, 1908.

PERSIAN telegraph line exchange.

Please refer to your telegram No. 19 of the 23rd instant.

We have agreed to the course suggested by Mr. Marling.

You should inform M. Isvolsky accordingly, explaining at the same time that it would, in our view, be advisable that the Convention should not be mentioned.

[2589]

No. 117.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 25, 1908.

PERSIAN telegraph line exchange.

The course you suggest in your telegram No. 26 of the 23rd instant is approved.

[3005]

No. 118.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 27.)

(Confidential.)

Sir,

India Office, January 25, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 24th January, 1908, I am directed to inform you that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to approve the suggestion of His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran as to the course to be followed with a view to obtaining the consent of the Persian Government to the exchange with Russia of the control of the Tehran-Meshed and Meshed-Seistan telegraph lines.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[3027]

No. 119.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 5.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, January 27, 1908.

FRENCH Financial Adviser for Persia.

Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 15 of the 22nd instant and your telegram No. 13 of the 23rd instant.

M. Pichon promises to communicate to the British and Russian Governments the instructions to M. Bizot.

[2940]

No. 120.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 27, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following telegram, No. 8, dated the 25th instant, received from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urmia:—

"The Governor-General of Azerbaijan, in a telegram dated the 23rd instant and received here last night, states that the Turkish General had come to Kusehkeriz, 12 miles from Soujboulak, with 1,500 Turkish troops, a large force of Kurds, and six guns, and had summoned the inhabitants to come over to the Turkish side, threatening to bombard them if they did not; that this threat had influenced two-thirds of the population; and that he could not hold out for more than three days longer. The Turkish General had, he added, just advanced as far as Agrikash, within 4 miles of Soujboulak."

[3025]

No. 121.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 27, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following telegram, No. 9, dated yesterday, received from Urmia:—

"A letter from Solduz states that the Turks, having placed guns in position against Soujboulak, informed the Governor-General that he must either evacuate or fight. A telegram from Miandoab says that he adopted the former course and arrived there yesterday.

"There has been some talk of the Frontier Commission going to investigate matters at Soujboulak, but it seems to be too late for that now. Tahir Pasha professes to be absolutely ignorant of the proceedings of the Turks to the south of Urmia."

[3036]

No. 122.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 20.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, January 27, 1908.

THOUGH Telegraphic Agency here has published announcement that the occupation of Soujboulak by Turkish troops has taken place, no official news of it has reached Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Though his Excellency considers matter to be of gravest importance, constituting an invasion and occupation of territory which Turks themselves admit to be undoubtedly Persian, he thinks it best to wait till report be confirmed. He has, he tells me, telegraphed both to Count Benckendorff and M. Zinoview. All these Turkish movements, which, in M. Isvolsky's opinion, apparently have been deliberately planned, are a matter of anxiety to the Russian Government.

(Repeated to Constantinople and Tehran.)

[2975]

No. 123.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 31.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 27, 1908.

CHARBAR Customs have been seized by Sardar Seyyid Khan of Geh, and British traders were compelled to pay all moneys due to Customs to him. His Majesty's ship "Perseus" was immediately sent by Resident, but arrived too late to protect British subjects.

Another Chief is taking action at Gwettur of a similar nature.

[1563]

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I fear Persian Government are powerless, but I have impressed on Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had had no news, necessity of protecting our telegraph line and of punishing Chief, and told him that I had suggested to Cox dispatch of "Perseus" to Gwettur for the protection, if necessary, of British subjects there.

[3026]

No. 124.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 27.)

(No. 32. Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 27, 1908.

PERSIAN Government are awaiting with the greatest impatience arrival of French Financial Adviser in Tehran. I am informed by French Minister that, according to his present arrangements, this would not be until the middle of March.

Could anything be done to accelerate it?

[3324]

No. 125.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 24.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 27, 1908.

COUNT BENCKENDORFF read to me to-day the information contained in the accompanying Memorandum, which the Russian Government had received, respecting the Turco-Persian frontier.

He said that M. Isvolsky was anxious to know what suggestions I could make.

I told him it was difficult for us to make any suggestions. We had supported every representation which Russia had made, and were most willing to co-operate with her. But we could not ourselves propose coercive measures. This part of the frontier was out of our reach, and if we were to take coercive measures against Turkey public opinion here would expect that we should expect some settlement of the Macedonian question as one of the results of them.

Count Benckendorff said he did not think M. Isvolsky contemplated coercive measures at the present time. But Count Benckendorff himself suggested that it might be possible to make a declaration to the Porte that we could not recognize the frontier as having been affected by these acts of aggression. He also suggested that the British and Russian Consuls might help in getting the Commission to meet, by taking part in it, and proposing a place for its meeting.

I said I was quite willing to join in anything of this kind that was likely to be of any use. We might, no doubt, make a declaration to the Porte that we considered the frontier was still to be found somewhere in the zone which had been laid down years ago, and that we could not recognize any frontier outside that zone. But anything we said would have to be couched in such terms as not to make it a humiliation for us if the Turk rejected what we put forward and we did not at once proceed to enforce it.

I impressed upon Count Benckendorff that though I did not propose any coercive measures, for the reasons I had given, I did not intend this to be construed as deprecating anything which Russia thought it necessary to do to restrain this Turkish aggression. At present this trouble affected Russia more than us, and our rôle was to support Russia. If the Turkish aggression extended south and approached the Gulf, we might have to consider what steps we should take ourselves.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

Inclosure in No. 125.

Memorandum respecting the Turco-Persian Frontier.

D'APRÈS les télégrammes de M. Hartwig et du Consul de Russie à Tabris, l'avance des Turcs en territoire Persan continue. Les Kurdes, probablement sous instigation Turque, ont entouré Suj Bulak et ont adressé au Gouverneur d'Azerbejan,

en marche sur cette ville avec des troupes, un ultimatum, portant qu'il avait à se retirer de la place immédiatement, sous menace s'il s'y refusait que Bajasit-Aga, Chef des Kurdes, aurait recours à la force. Sans moyen ultérieur de se défendre, le Gouvernement Persan s'est adressé à nous pour que les empiétements Turcs sur territoire Persan soient arrêtés.

M. Zinovieff a relevé à la Porte la contradiction entre les assurances du Gouvernement Ottoman et l'état de choses sur la frontière.

Le Ministre Ottoman des Affaires Étrangères a répondu que le Gouvernement Turc n'est nullement responsable de l'état d'ébullition parmi les Kurdes de la frontière, causée par les mesures vexatoires du Gouverneur d'Azerbejan, Firman Firma, qui a décrété l'incendie des villages Kurdes-Sunnites, mais que malgré cela le Gouvernement Ottoman ferait son possible dans le sens désiré par le Gouvernement Russe.

Quant à une localité pour la réunion des Commissaires, le Grand Vizir et le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères ont bien déclaré ne pas avoir d'objection au choix d'Urmiah; tout de même, leur réponse à ce sujet indique qu'ils préféreraient voir ce point établi par les Commissaires eux-mêmes, et qu'ils pensent que le bourg de Mevaneh serait indiqué.

[3046]

No. 126.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 43.)

Sir,

Paris, January 27, 1908.

WITH reference to the telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg No. 15 of the 22nd instant, and to your telegrams No. 13 of the 23rd and No. 14 of the 25th instant, I have the honour to inform you that I ascertained from the Russian Ambassador that the promise referred to in Sir Arthur Nicolson's telegram was reported to the Russian Government in a telegram of the 21st November from the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, which stated that—

"M. Pichon a reçu hier de M. de La Martinière et du Ministre de Perse le projet du contrat avec M. Bizot.

"Les deux premiers points portent que M. Bizot sera engagé à l'effet d'assister le Gouvernement Persan pour l'étude des questions et réformes financières présentées par celui-ci à son appréciation, ainsi que pour l'établissement de la Banque Nationale. Il remplira tant à l'intérieur qu'à l'extérieur les missions qui lui seront confiées.

"M. Pichon se propose de s'occuper sans retard, de concert avec le Ministre des Finances, des instructions qui seront données à M. Bizot et de nous les communiquer."

I arranged with M. Nelidow that he should see M. Pichon first, and that I should speak to his Excellency to the same effect as the Ambassador, viz., that as it had been agreed between the Russian, British, and French Governments that the recommendations which the Financial Adviser should make to the Persian Government were to be such as would be consistent with the interests of Russia and England in Persia, it was desirable that the Russian and British Governments should be made acquainted with the instructions given to M. Bizot, in order that they might communicate them to their Representatives at Tehran, so as to insure harmonious working between the British and Russian Legations and the Financial Adviser.

M. Nelidow, having for the last few days been confined to the house by illness, could not ask for an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs before this morning.

M. Pichon made no difficulty about undertaking to the Russian Ambassador, and afterwards to me, to communicate to our respective Governments the instructions to be given to the French Financial Adviser.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS BERTIE.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received January 28.)

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Admiralty, January 27, 1908.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, extracts from a letter, dated the 26th ultimo, which has been received, through Commander-in-chief, East Indies, from the Commanding Officer, His Majesty's ship "Sphinx," respecting affairs in the Persian Gulf.

A copy has also been sent to the India Office.

I am, &c.
(Signed) C. I. THOMAS.

Inclosure 1 in No. 127.

Commander Litchfield to Commander-in-chief, East Indies.

(Confidential)

(Extract.)

"Sphinx," at Kurrachee, December 26, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report that I resumed duty as Senior Naval Officer on the 19th December, on my return to Bushire from Mohammerah, where I received a telegram from Captain Hickley, of His Majesty's ship "Highflyer," advising me of his departure from Muscat to Bombay.

2. My proceedings at Koweit and Mohammerah have been separately reported.

3. Having landed the Resident, I left Bushire at noon on the 19th December for Muscat en route for Kurrachee, where I had been ordered to arrive not later than the 27th December . . . I arrived at Muscat 9 A.M. on the 22nd December . . . "Lapwing" arrived from the Mekran Coast at 9:30 A.M.

4. "Redbreast" arrived from the Mekran Coast at 10 A.M. on the 23rd December . . . "Redbreast" and "Lapwing" had been directed to meet me at Muscat if possible.

5. After discussing various matters with Lieutenant-Commanders Hose and Gouldsmith . . . I sailed for Kurrachee at 11 A.M. on the 23rd December. I gave "Redbreast" and "Lapwing" permission to remain over Christmas Day at Muscat, provided nothing cropped up to necessitate the presence of one or both elsewhere . . .

6. Recent movements of the "Redbreast" and "Lapwing" have been as follows:—"Redbreast" left Muscat for Galeg on the 4th December upon receipt of information that a dhow was expected there with rifles. On arrival off Galeg next morning two dhows were sighted and searched. One was a trader and the other empty. Subsequent inquiries indicated that the latter was the vessel from which 185 rifles had been landed the night before. Had the information reached "Redbreast" a little earlier the capture might have been effected. "Redbreast" then cruised off the coast until the 10th, visiting Chahbar, Bir, and Jask, two dhows being chased and searched off Galeg on the 8th, but without result.

7. On the 11th "Redbreast" returned to Muscat to coal. On arrival the Political Agent informed Lieutenant-Commander Hose that fifty-three Afghans, who had arrived by mail to buy arms, were in the quarantine station, and it was very desirable, with a view to checking the arms traffic and to avoid disturbances on shore, for these men to be deported as soon as possible. The Sultan had forbidden his subjects to sell arms to the Afghans, and feared disturbances if they were allowed to remain in Muscat. The captain of the mail-steamer refused to embark them, on the ground that they were dangerous passengers.

Neither the Sultan nor Major Grey considered that forcible detention in one of the forts was warranted in this case, as a warning which has since been issued had not been received by these men.

Under the circumstances Major Grey requested that the Afghans might be embarked in "Redbreast" for conveyance to Kurrachee.

Lieutenant Hose telegraphed to the Senior Officer (Captain Hickley) for permission to comply with this request. This was granted, subject to the procedure being considered absolutely necessary. The fifty-three Afghans were embarked on the 13th, and "Redbreast" left for Kurrachee, arriving there without incident on the 16th, when the passengers were disembarked. The Afghans were accommodated on the fore-castle,

the white crew being moved aft, and a Maxim-gun trained forward mounted on the poop as a precaution against any outbreak.

I have directed Lieutenant-Commander Hose to send in a special report of this service, but refer to it here, as no report of the circumstances can have reached Captain Hickley, who was Senior Officer at the time.

8. "Redbreast" left Kurrachee on the 18th December and arrived at Bir, on the Mekran Coast, on the 20th, where she was joined by "Lapwing." Here Mr. New, of the Land Telegraphs, was fallen in with. Lieutenant Hose is preparing a special report with regard to the arrangements which can be made with him for communicating intelligence of arms runners to His Majesty's ships on the Mekran Coast. I am informed that eight telephone stations have already been established among the line between Jask and Chahbar, and ten camel sowars will patrol the line, gathering information and reporting it through the nearest telephone station to Jask and Chahbar.

9. "Redbreast" next visited Saidaich, boarding three dhows on the way, and after carrying out night practice with cannon tube, left for Muscat on the 22nd.

10. As reported to you in Captain Hickley's letter of the 10th December, "Lapwing" was ordered from Jask to Bunder Abbas on the 30th November. On arrival on the 1st December she anchored as close as possible to the town, and Lieutenant Gouldsmith communicated with the Political Agent. The population were in a state of panic, the people having shut themselves up in their houses; the British subjects had taken refuge in the Consulate, but returned to their quarter when the "Lapwing" appeared. The presence of a British ship appears also to have had a reassuring effect on the native population, as the next day the town assumed a more normal and lively aspect. Preparations were made to land an armed party and a gun, for the protection of the Consulate and British subjects, should it become necessary. No disturbances, however, occurred in the town itself, but about twenty people appear to have been killed in some fighting on the outskirts.

Several villages to within 10 miles of Bunder Abbas are reported to have been pillaged by the rebel force, estimated at 1,000 strong. There was no damage to British subjects or property. The Derya Begi, with about 100 soldiers and two guns, arrived from Bushire on the 13th, and His Majesty's Consul considered it unnecessary for the "Lapwing" to remain any longer.

11. "Lapwing" returned to Muscat on the 15th, having called at Jask on the way, and left again for Tank on the 19th, having received news of the departure of a dhow with arms for that place. The only dhow seen was searched, but without success, on the 20th. . . . "Lapwing" proceeded to join "Redbreast," off Bir, afterwards proceeding to Muscat.

12. Major Grey informed me that the steps that had been taken to exclude Afghan arms buyers from Muscat, with the co-operation of the Sultan, are likely to result in a material check to the arms traffic, for a time at least. The Afghans having been warned, it is intended to detain any future gangs who land in Muscat and deport them in small batches by mail steamer.

I also understand that the French Consul has co-operated as regards prohibiting the sale of arms to Afghans by French merchants in Muscat. No serious importation of arms on the Mekran Coast appears to have taken place within the last few months.

15. I arrived at Kurrachee at daylight this morning, and will hand over the duties of Senior Officer of the Division to Commander Christian of His Majesty ship "Perseus," in accordance with your telegram No. 58.

Inclosure 2 in No. 127.

Commander Litchfield to Commander-in-chief, East Indies.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

"Sphinx," at Bushire, December 19, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following Report as to the disposal of prisoners Abdulla and Ibrahim-bin-Humaidi, who were transferred to my charge by Captain Hickley, of His Majesty's ship "Highflyer," for conveyance to Mohammerah, to be handed over to the Sheikh for punishment.

2. Having embarked Major Cox, Political Resident, I left Bushire, in accordance with Captain Hickley's sailing orders, at 5:15 P.M. of the 15th, and arrived at Koweit 11:50 A.M. the 16th December, my orders being to call there first with a view to confronting the prisoners with Sheikh Mubarek and his dependants.

3. I landed with Major Cox, taking with us the prisoners under escort. We interviewed Sheikh Mubarek, who expressed his great gratification at the capture of these pirates. Sheikh Mubarek and his son Sheikh Jabir at once identified the brothers Humaidi, who on their part made no attempt to deny previous acquaintance; in fact, Abdulla took the opportunity to plead for the Sheikh's intercession on his behalf, swearing that he would never offend again.

Sheikh Mubarek stated he had no doubt whatever that these Humaidi brothers had been responsible for the piratical attack on the Koweit dhow in January 1907; and that, whereas it has hitherto been understood that no one escaped from that outrage, he informed us he had lately received information that a young slave-girl named Wassifa had been spared by the pirates and sold by them into slavery in Kata. He said that had these men been his own subjects, whom we were handing over to him, he would shoot them offhand, adding that he hoped Sheikh Khazal, whose subjects they are, would do so.

4. On our return from visiting Sheikh Mubarek, with whom we had spent about two hours, we found that the prisoners had been generally recognized by the Koweit public, and there appeared to be evident satisfaction at their capture. It is thought that the fact of the appearance of the pirates in Koweit in charge of British marines is likely to have an excellent effect in helping to publish the news of their capture by His Majesty's ships throughout the Gulf, and drive home the point that piracy in these waters will not be tolerated.

5. Having returned to the ship with the prisoners, I sailed at 5 P.M. for Mohammerah, arrived at the outer-bar buoy 3.30 A.M. the 17th December, and anchored to wait for the tide, proceeding over the bar and up the river at 7 A.M., arriving at Mohammerah at 3 P.M. that afternoon. Sheikh Mubarek had taken the opportunity to send a letter by the ship to his friend Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah, in which he is understood to have conveyed his congratulations at the capture of the pirates, and expressed the hope that a swift and fitting punishment would be meted out to them for their crimes.

6. Major Cox and I proceeded to visit Sheikh Khazal, taking with us the prisoners under escort. The two brothers were well known to the Sheikh, being his subjects, and the elder Abdulla had previously been imprisoned by him for piracy, and had only been released at the express request of Sheikh Jabir (brother of Sheikh Mubarek at Koweit), to whom some other members of the Humaidi family had rendered some service.

It also transpired that a third brother, Malluh-bin-Humaidi, was still in prison at Mohammerah, he having been captured by the Sheikh's spies when the British authorities were pressing him in connection with piracies in the Shatt-al-Arab two or three years ago. This is the man who, according to some reports, has been supposed to be dead.

7. Sheikh Khazal said that the career of crime of these Humaidi brothers was notorious, and he, personally, was positive of their blood-guiltiness.

After a short conversation Major Cox read to the Sheikh the Memorandum a copy of which is attached, and then asked the Sheikh what he was prepared to do.

A lengthy discussion ensued.

After the custom of the East, the Sheikh first proposed that he should cut off the hands of the prisoners, or put out their eyes and imprison them for life. He was again reminded of the express stipulation of the British Government that no such barbarity should be inflicted.

He was told that, according to the ideas of the British Government, the proper punishment was death, if he was satisfied that the prisoners were guilty of murder, and, as he admitted knowledge of the guilt, he was urged to punish the prisoners by immediate and public execution as an example.

8. Sheikh Khazal was, however, altogether opposed to this course, although he said personally he would be very glad to see it done.

Being asked what were his objections, he stated various reasons in turn.

At first he said he feared he would be taken to task for his action by the Persian Government or Parliament and press, which latter had been especially hostile to him lately.

When asked if it would facilitate matters if we were to proceed to Fao and get in communication with Persian Government through the British Minister, the Sheikh said that, in the improbable event of the Persian Government instructing him to put the prisoners to death, it would be exceedingly difficult for him to comply, as such a form of punishment was unheard of in Mohammerah, and would be resented

by his people generally, and especially by the tribes to which the Humaidi family belong.

This would create tribal difficulties for himself.

Mr. McDouall, His Majesty's Consul for many years at Mohammerah, considered that the Sheikh had grounds for the apprehension he expressed in this connection.

9. The Sheikh showed no signs, after a long discussion, in which his two Ministers joined, of receding from his attitude with regard to the question of public execution, and it was considered useless to press the point further.

10. There was still one other question which appeared to exercise the Sheikh and his Ministers, and make them hesitate to give a receipt and guarantee with regard to the prisoners in a form which we could accept before delivering them over.

This was the fear that, the pirates being originally his subjects, claims might be made against him as their Chief for compensation in connection with piracies committed by them in the past.

Upon Major Cox giving him a written assurance that no such claims would be made by the British Government, the Sheikh readily furnished the written receipt and undertaking, of which a translation is attached.

11. Upon obtaining this guarantee the prisoners were delivered to the Sheikh's guard, and we returned to the ship.

12. After the business was concluded, the Sheikh apologized for his official hesitation, and expressed his great private obligation and gratification for the action taken by the British Government in the capture of the pirates. He added that were he in such a strong position as Sheikh Mubarek, who enjoys the effective support of the British Government, the apprehensions which had now influenced him in discussing the present matter would not have existed.

13. I think there is every reason to believe that Sheikh Khazal may be relied upon to fulfil his bond, and thus insure the immunity of the sea-going public of the Gulf from any further outrages by this family, of whom three out of four are now disposed of. Major Cox concurs in this opinion.

As a public example, perhaps life imprisonment may not be considered so effective a retribution as a public execution would have been, but even had the Persian Government been ready to consent to such a course, Major Cox was convinced that the delivery of the prisoners to the Derya Begi at Bushire, and the protracted proceedings which would have undoubtedly followed, in which bribery and corruption would have played their usual part, if they had had any finality at all would either have resulted in the defeat of justice or such tardy execution of it as would have largely nullified the effect of the British action as an example and deterrent in the Gulf.

I trust therefore that our proceeding, as above reported, will meet with approval.

14. I proceeded down river at 9.30 P.M. the 17th December, and anchored at Fao 2.30 next morning to wait for the tide over Bar.

Having reported result of visit to Mohammerah by telegraph to you, Admiralty, and Secretary to Government of India, Calcutta, I left at 9 A.M. for Bushire, arriving here at 6.30 this morning, and landed Major Cox.

I have, &c.

(Signed) SHIRLEY LITCHFIELD, *Commander and Senior Naval Officer, Persian Gulf Division.*

Inclosure 3 in No. 127.

Memorandum communicated to the Sheikh of Mohammerah in connection with the Delivery to him of two of the Humaidi Pirate Family, December 17, 1907.

THE British Government, in the interests of the maritime peace which they labour to maintain, recently gave orders to their men-of-war to capture your subjects, the Humaidi pirates.

Thank God, after much trouble, two of the brothers, Abdalla, the ringleader, and Azibi (or Ibrahim, as he is known on the Persian Coast) have been captured at Ganawa, under Bunder Rig.

Abdur Reza, who was also there, managed to escape inland.

The fourth brother, Malluh, you have already had for some time in prison at Mohammerah, in connection with similar misdeeds.

Abdulla has also been imprisoned by you in the past for piracy, and the family and their history are well known to you.

As they are your subjects, we have been directed (with the concurrence of the Persian Government) to hand them over to you to deal with on receiving adequate assurances from you that they will be dealt with in a way which will render the sea-going public immune from their depredations in future.

The British Government particularly desire it to be stipulated that the pirates shall not be subjected to any torture or barbarity, for it is not hidden from you that such methods are contrary to the ideas of Western Governments. On the other hand, they consider that, if guilty of piracy and the taking of lives, the pirates should be executed.

(The above was communicated verbally.)

Inclosure 4 in No. 127.

Acknowledgment and Undertaking received from Sheikh Khazal, Sheikh of Mohammerah, on the Delivery to him of two of the Humaidi Pirates, his Subjects, December 17, 1907.

(Translation.)

LET it not remain hidden; with reference to Abdulla and Adhibi, the sons of Humaidi, who are well known and famous among all men as pirates, and who on this account absconded a few years ago from this neighbourhood and went to the vicinity of Dayyir and Ganawa, the ships of the great English Government have captured them and brought them here this day, the 12th Zilkaadah, 1325 A.H., and they have reached me through the medium of the British Consul-General in the Persian Gulf and the Captain of the Government ship "Sphinx."

I intend to keep them fettered and imprisoned for life.

I will not release them. Should I ever let them go I shall be liable for so doing to the Ministers of the high Persian Government.

Should any claims arise against them for years past, or should any one formulate claims (now), no liability shall attach to me in respect thereof, seeing that they have arisen in that neighbourhood and jurisdiction (i.e., Dayyir, &c.).

Dated, 12th Zilkaadeh, 1325 A.H.

(Seal of Sheikh Khazal.)

True translation.

(Signed) P. Z. Cox.

[3171] No. 128.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 23.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 28, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I have received the following telegram No. 10 from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urumia dated the 27th instant:—

"Tahir Pasha, who with rest of Turkish Commission, arrived yesterday, says General declares he only interfered because the Governor-General, besides other atrocities of a kind revolting to Turkish sensibilities, was executing Kurds and burning villages, and that he is prepared to answer for his actions."

[3172] No. 129.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 24.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 28, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. Your telegram No. 16 of to-day.

I am informed at the Porte that they have not yet received a reply from the Military Commandant to the inquiries they have addressed to him respecting the alleged occupation of Sonjbulak, but I was assured by the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday that should it be proved that the Turkish troops had advanced they would be withdrawn.

After seeing the Sultan the Grand Vizier to-day sent fresh and categorical instructions in this sense. I think it is probable that Fazil Pasha advanced, as is stated by Tahir Pasha, to protect the Sunni tribes, and that if this is so his action will be disavowed.

The Russian Ambassador, with whom I am in close touch, informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday that it was possible that Persia would appeal to the Russian Government for military intervention.

I have accentuated this note of warning, which seems to have made a great impression on Tewfik Pasha, by pointing out the serious complications which might ensue; and his Excellency has no doubt reported M. Zinoviev's language to the Sultan.

[3136]

No. 130.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 28, 1908.

TABREEZ situation.

For the last ten days intermittent fighting, which has now become serious, has been going on in Tabreez. It is feared that bazaars will be pillaged, and much anxiety prevails.

اريد Russians are introducing more Cossacks.

[3137]

No. 131.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 28, 1908.

1903-1904 Loan.

I have received a message from the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the effect that interest on loan (which amounts, I presume, to 13,601l. 0s. 9d.) will shortly be paid.

As regards the conditions we attach to suspension of sinking fund he also promises, but vaguely, to send a reply. As, however, he has frequently done so before, I venture to suggest that, in order to bring his Excellency to the point-authorization may be given me to inform him in a written communication that His Majesty's Government consider their conditions as tacitly accepted by Persian Government in view of time that has elapsed.

[3026]

No. 132.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 28, 1908.

APPOINTMENT of M. Bizot as Financial Adviser to Persian Government.

Please refer to telegram No. 32 from Tehran, and, acting in concert with M. Nélidow, do what is possible to hasten M. Bizot's departure for Tehran.

[2940]

No. 133.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 16.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 28, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier dispute.

It is evident, from Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 8, that either the Ottoman Government is intentionally misleading us by its assurances, or else their instructions are being ignored by their General.

Some reply would therefore seem necessary to previous communication from the Porte, and you should consult with M. Zinoviev accordingly.

[3026]

No. 134.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

FINANCIAL Adviser for Persia.

Please refer to my telegram No. 17 of to-day's date to Paris.

It is desirable that the Russian Ambassador at Paris should be instructed in same sense as Sir F. Bertie, with a view to expediting M. Bizot's departure.

Suggest this to Russian Government.

Foreign Office, January 28, 1908.

[3167]

No. 135.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I learn from Count Benckendorff that some suggestion for solution of difficulty would be welcomed by Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Count Benckendorff himself suggested that Sir N. O'Connor and M. Zinoview should make a joint declaration to the Porte to the effect that their Governments could not recognize any frontier outside the zone which they delimited originally, nor acquiesce in the results of recent Turkish aggression.

If M. Isvolsky has any suggestions to offer I shall be glad to consider them, and if he proposes joint action, as outlined by Count Benckendorff, I think we might agree.

As regards coercive measures, I told Count Benckendorff I could not propose any such course, which would arouse public expectations here of reform in Macedonia as well, where the situation, already very serious, seems likely to get still worse. In Count Benckendorff's view M. Isvolsky has no intention of embarking on such a course as yet. I explained that I had no desire to deprecate any action which might be considered necessary by the Russian Government in order to check the aggressions of the Turks, but I was unable to propose coercive action myself.

Foreign Office, January 28, 1908.

[3177]

No. 136.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 6.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

PERSIA: Financial Adviser.

Mr. Marling's telegram No. 32 of the 27th instant and your telegram No. 17 of to-day.

When I saw M. Pichon to-day in regard to the instructions given to M. Bizot I asked his Excellency to hasten his departure for Tehran, and I suggested that the obstacles in the way of the journey at this season of the year, which I understood were given as reasons for delay, could be got over.

Paris, January 28, 1908.

[3260]

No. 137.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 25.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Vice-Consul at Tabreez forwards the following from his agent at Soujboulak:—

Constantinople, January 29, 1908.

"The town has been attacked by Kurds, but the Persians repulsed them. Ferik Pasha subsequently arrived from Passova accompanied by a large number of Kurds and with 800 Turkish troops and six guns, and, after occupying the surrounding villages, pitched his camp within two miles of town. He then informed the inhabitants that unless the Prince Firman Firma withdrew immediately he would bombard the city, and they, terrified by this threat, entreated the Prince to comply. The latter is now reported to have withdrawn to Miandoab."

[3261]

No. 138.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

FINANCIAL Adviser in Persia.

Refers to Foreign Office telegram No. 35 of the 28th instant.

M. de Nelidoff will be instructed to concert with British Ambassador in Paris in requesting the French Government to accelerate Financial Adviser's departure to Tehran.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

St. Petersburg, January 29, 1908.

[3259]

No. 139.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

FRONTIER. Acting Consul-General at Tabreez telegraphs to-day as follows:—

Tehran, January 29, 1908.

"Following from our Agent at Soujboulak:—

"Persian troops repulsed Kurds who attacked town. Subsequently Mohammed Fazl Pasha Ferik arrived from Passva, and encamped within 2 miles of Soujboulak, bringing with him six guns, 800 Ottoman troops, and a large number of Kurds, with whom he occupied the villages all round the city. The Ferik then informed the inhabitants that unless Firman Firma withdrew at once he would bombard the city. Prince was accordingly requested to leave by inhabitants, who feared Turkish threat."

"Firmin Firma's retirement to Miandoab is now affirmed here."

No confirmation is to hand that Turks have as yet actually occupied Soujboulak itself.

[3312]

No. 140.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 30.)

Sir,

India Office, January 29, 1908.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant as to the instructions to be sent to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran regarding the demolition of the forts of the Dashti Chief as punishment for his protection of the Dayir pirates.

The probability has, it seems to Mr. Morley, to be considered of the Persian Government indefinitely postponing the fulfilment of their promise to destroy the forts themselves without our assistance. In that case, under the instructions proposed, after a certain time, unless indeed the matter is allowed to drop, we may find ourselves obliged to do the work without Persian co-operation or approval.

Such action appears to Mr. Morley open to serious objection in the present state of political feeling at Tehran. It will certainly be resented, and it may easily be misunderstood, or perhaps deliberately misrepresented as indicating aggressive intentions on our part in the Gulf and an abandonment of the principle of maintaining the independence of Persia, with results embarrassing to our whole policy in the country.

Similar objections apply to the proposal to levy a fine. Payment by the Chief could hardly be enforced without naval action, while, in the present state of Persian finance, it would be impolitic unnecessarily to lodge a claim against the Tehran exchequer.

In these circumstances, and in view of the success of the measures to secure the surrender of the pirates, which can scarcely fail to produce a satisfactory impression of our power and moderation, Mr. Morley would suggest, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that it would be well not to carry the matter further.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[3296]

No. 141.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 7.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Paris, January 29, 1908.

FRENCH Financial Adviser for Persian Government.

My immediately preceding telegram of yesterday's date.

I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day, and told him that, when I spoke to him on the 27th instant of the desirability that M. Bizot should start for Tehran without delay, I did so knowing the importance of his presence there, but without having received specific instructions on the subject. You had since then directed me to urge that, as the Persian Government were awaiting M. Bizot's arrival with impatience, he should be instructed to hasten his departure.

The Russian Ambassador made a representation to M. Pichon to the same effect, although he had not received instructions to do so from his Government.

M. Pichon promised to speak to the Minister of Finance on the subject, and he told me that he had instructed the Political Director yesterday to draft at once the instructions to be given to M. Bizot, in order that they might be communicated to the Governments of Great Britain and of Russia.

[1990]

No. 142.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 30, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 277 of the 30th ultimo, in which you report the activity displayed by the German Chargé d'Affaires during the recent crisis at Tehran, and his attempts to counteract the joint efforts of yourself and M. de Hartwig to promote the restoration of order.

Your proceedings and attitude in the very difficult circumstances in which you were placed are entirely approved by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[3462]

No. 143.

Mr. Preece to Foreign Office.—(Received January 31.)

Sir,

1, St. James' Place, London, January 30, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 27th instant, inclosing a paraphrase of a telegram from Mr. Marling.

The observation made by Captain Lorimer, that "the Syndicate do not seem to be aware of the fact that the instalment has been kept back" is quite true. Had they but known that the Legation had ordered this to be done, their telegram of the 3rd December to Mr. Reynolds would never have been sent. Happily Mr. Reynolds used his discretion, and ignored their suggestions. He must of course follow the Legation's instructions; from here, so far away as we are, we can but offer suggestions. The Syndicate have no intention of being blackmailed, nor do they wish to be pushed by the Bakhtiaris, but at the same time they are quite willing to adhere to their agreement, and pay the extra 500*l.* per annum as soon as Captain Lorimer is satisfied that the guards supplied are adequate.

It is of the very utmost importance that Mr. Reynolds and his men should be allowed to work quietly and in safety during these next few months.

As is suggested, I have lately received a letter direct from the Khans, but it was after the wire was sent, the date of despatch from Ispahan being the 20th December [?] and receipt here the 11th January. I have replied in friendly terms, but telling the Khans very clearly that I cannot interfere with the action of the Legation, and that they must settle matters with Mr. Marling.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

[3452]

No. 144.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 26.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, January 31, 1908.

A FRESH Iradé has been communicated to the Turkish Commanders on the Persian frontier instructing them to prevent the tribes from crossing from one side to the other and thus risk the creation of incidents between the two Governments, and prohibiting them from making the least advance. The Porte persistently denies the alleged occupation of Soujboulak, and has sent telegraphic instructions to the Turkish Ambassador at Tehran to make representations to the Persian Government deprecating recourse to punitive expeditions at the present time as they might lead to complications of a kind calculated to endanger the success of the negotiations on the frontier.

[3451]

No. 145.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, January 31, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Telegraphing from Kasr-i-Shirin, His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah states there is nothing to report.

Reference is to your telegram No. 15 of the 11th instant.

[3312]

No. 146.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 29.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, January 31, 1908.

DAYIR pirates.

Please refer to your telegram No. 23 of the 17th instant.

We do not think it would be politic to proceed to further measures by threatening to undertake demolition of strongholds ourselves or to insist on a fine being paid, given the existing Persian political situation and the satisfactory results of measures adopted for obtaining pirates' surrender.

It is, however, desirable that the Persian Government should undertake these further measures, and you should lose no opportunity of impressing this on them.

[3587]

No. 147.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 1.)

(No. 27.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 1, 1908.

FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia, No. 11, dated the 30th ultimo:—

"The Persian Commissioner has sent a written protest to Tahir Pasha on the subject of the action of the Turkish General at Soujboulak; he replied that the General had only rendered the Governor-General benevolent assistance in order to extricate him and calm the Kurds, and there was, therefore, no ground for protest. He referred also to an appeal made to the Caliph for help by the Moslem inhabitants, who had been driven to desperation by the conduct of their late Governor. Tahir Pasha added that when the question of Soujboulak came up for consideration, this matter would also be looked into.

"Tahir Pasha's attention was called yesterday by the Persian Commissioner to the reports that are rife that the Turks intend to advance to the east of Baradost, and he replied that something of the kind had been proposed, but had said there was no hurry.

"Since the arrival of the two senior military members of this Commission, Tahir's attitude seems to be generally more uncompromising, and the Persian Commissioner is more than ever convinced that these negotiations are futile."

[1563]

[3462]

No. 148.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 30.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 1, 1908.

PLEASE refer to your telegram No. 19, dated 16th January [Oil Syndicate].

Lorimer's surmise that the Syndicate were not aware of the instalment having been retained is correct.

The Khans have communicated with the Syndicate direct. The latter have answered (since 3rd December, when the instructions detailed in your telegram under reference were sent) that the whole matter must be settled by the Khans with you, and that the Syndicate have no intention of interfering with your action.

[3618]

No. 149.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 32.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 18, 1908.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your despatch No. 7 of the 11th instant, transmitting copy of Mr. Marling's despatch No. 259 of the 2nd December, 1907, relative to the number of Russian employés on the Khaf-Seistan telegraph line. I would beg leave to remark that I do not think that there was any intention on the part of the Russian Government to give a misleading account of the details which this Embassy had requested, and, indeed, it would be difficult to see what object would be gained by their wishing to do so.

It is probable that when M. Goubastoff wrote to me on the 17th September it had been decided to reduce the establishment from six to three employés, and he therefore gave me the latter figures. The reduction had been effected on or before the 7th November, according to a report from Major Sykes.

I may take this opportunity of mentioning that I believe no difficulty would be raised by the Russian Government to the Persian Government being approached on the subject of the exchange of the "control" over the two telegraph lines if the British and Russian Representatives consider that this step may now be taken. I should add that I am sure that the Russian Government will not desire, once that the transfer has been effected, to make any comments on the number of employés the British Telegraph Administration may consider it advisable to maintain on the line, as the matter will be no longer of any interest to them.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[3620]

No. 150.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 34.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 20, 1908.

IN conformity with the instructions which I had the honour to receive by your telegram No. 18 of the 18th instant, I asked M. Isvolsky what steps he proposed to take at Paris in regard to the "lettre de service" which the French Government would issue to M. Bizot. His Excellency said that he had no knowledge of any "lettre de service," and did not quite understand my inquiry.

I replied that the question had arisen during his absence, but the facts were that the Russian Minister at Tehran had proposed certain conditions which he considered should be inserted in M. Bizot's contract, and I related to his Excellency, so far as my memory served me, what these conditions were. The two Governments were ready to accept the proposal, but later, in accordance with a suggestion originally emanating from the French Minister in Persia, it was considered preferable that the conditions should be stated in the "lettre de service," or general instructions, which the French Government would issue to M. Bizot, and that they should not be inserted in the contract itself. At the time M. Goubastoff was desirous to see these instructions, but so far as I was aware they had not yet been drawn up.

M. Isvolsky asked what I thought should be done at Paris, and I said that

I presumed that if the instructions were communicated to the two Governments, so that they might have cognizance of their tenor and see if they met the circumstances of the case, nothing more would be needed. M. Isvolsky observed that the question was a new one to him, but he would examine it and let me have his views as soon as possible.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

P.S. *January 22.*—I have to-day received a note from M. Isvolsky, of which I beg leave to transmit a copy, stating that he has instructed the Russian Ambassador at Paris to concert with Sir F. Bertie in approaching the French Government on the question.

A. N.

Inclosure in No. 150.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

[Non datée.]

JE m'empresse de vous faire savoir que le contrat entre le Gouvernement Persan et M. Bizot, Conseiller Financier à Téhéran, étant déjà conclu et son départ pour la Perse décidé, je viens de télégraphier à notre Ambassadeur à Paris, en invitant M. Nélidoff de se mettre, de concert avec son collègue d'Angleterre, en rapports avec le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de la République et d'exprimer à M. Pichon l'espoir qu'il voudra bien nous communiquer, ainsi qu'il l'avait promis, dans un bref délai, le texte des instructions dont sera muni M. Bizot par son Gouvernement.

Il est bien entendu que les instructions dont il s'agit doivent contenir l'obligation pour M. Bizot de conformer son activité financière aux indications des Représentants de la Grande-Bretagne et de Russie à Téhéran.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,

(Signé) ISVOLSKY.

[3628]

No. 151.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 42.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 22, 1908.

TO-DAY was the weekly reception of M. Isvolsky, and I told his Excellency that I had received a telegram reporting that the Turkish Commander had apparently summarily requested the Persian Governor-General to remove himself from Soujboulak, and I should be glad to know what his views were on the subject.

M. Isvolsky said that similar news had reached him, and he had telegraphed to M. Zinoview to ascertain what steps, in his opinion, might be taken with the view of representing the matter to the Porte. His telegram had crossed one from M. Zinoview, who reported that, immediately on hearing from M. de Hartwig of the action of the Turkish Commander, he had addressed a letter to Tewfik Pasha pointing out that the proceedings of the Turkish military authorities were in direct contradiction with the assurances which had been given by the Ottoman Government; and that he had received a reply to the effect that the Porte would do what was possible to avoid any complication arriving, and expressing surprise that the military authorities should have acted as alleged. Tewfik Pasha had added that the Ottoman Government were in no wise responsible for the effervescence among the Kurdish tribes, which had been provoked by the action of the Persian Governor-General in burning some Kurdish villages.

M. Isvolsky asked whether His Majesty's Government had any suggestions to make, and I said that you were chiefly desirous of ascertaining his views, but perhaps he might wish Sir N. O'Connor to support his Russian colleague in the representations which the latter had made. His Excellency said that he would indeed very much desire that Sir N. O'Connor should do so, but he thought it probable that M. Zinoview would have already solicited the co-operation of his British colleague.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[3632]

No. 152.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 46.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 27, 1908.

I ASKED M. Isvolsky to-day whether he had received any news as to the reported occupation of Soujboulak by the Ottoman troops, and his Excellency said that he had had no official confirmation of the report which had been published by the telegraphic agency here to the effect that Turkish troops had actually taken possession of that town. He had telegraphed both to Count Benckendorff and to M. Zinoviev, to ascertain what information might have reached them, and he inquired whether I had any intelligence to give him. I read to him the substance of the two last telegrams which Mr. Wratislaw had repeated to me, and which showed that the Ottoman troops were in the close neighbourhood of Soujboulak, apparently with the object of taking possession.

M. Isvolsky said that all this was a very serious matter, as it was evident that the Turks were advancing into and occupying localities which they themselves admitted were in Persian territory. It would be well to await further details and confirmation of the reports, so that the two Governments should be in possession of indisputable facts. It would then be necessary for the two Governments to discuss what steps they should take. The representations which the two Ambassadors had from time to time made at Constantinople, in regard to Turkish encroachments, might now have to take the form of a more formal and official character. The question was a most important one to Russia, for reasons which he had already explained to me, and the last acts of the Ottoman authorities showed that they were taking advantage of the disturbed condition of Persia to carry out a carefully prepared plan. Moreover, military preparations were being made at Van and other places, which were disquieting, and he was anxious to obtain fuller particulars than those already in his possession.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[3633]

No. 153.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 47.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 27, 1908.

I SPOKE to M. Isvolsky to-day as to effecting the exchange of the "control" respectively exercised by the Russian and British telegraph administration over the telegraph lines Khaf-Seistan and Tehran-Meshed, and I laid before him the mode of procedure as suggested by Mr. Marling in his telegram No. 26 of the 23rd instant, and which had met with your approval. I explained to his Excellency the reasons which counselled the course which it was proposed to follow, and I added that I believed that M. de Hartwig was in accord with his British colleague that the Persian Government could best be approached in the manner suggested.

M. Isvolsky said that he had nothing from M. de Hartwig on the subject, but that he would give me a reply after he had thought over the matter. I do not anticipate that his Excellency will make any difficulty in agreeing to the proposed procedure.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[3634]

No. 154.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 48.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, January 28, 1908.

I HAD the honour to receive your despatch No. 10 of the 15th instant, drawing my attention to a statement of M. Isvolsky, which I reported in my despatch No. 627 of the 23rd ultimo, that the choice of the Legation at Tehran for an asylum to the Shah should be left to the Diplomatic Body.

I mentioned the matter to M. Isvolsky this afternoon, and said that it was a point which it would be well to clear up, as my Government would be unwilling that the

Diplomatic Body should be invited to decide as to the asylum which it might be necessary to accord to the Shah, as this procedure would internationalize the question; and they presumed that this result would be as unacceptable to the Russian Government as it was to them.

M. Isvolsky remarked that there must be some misunderstanding, as, so far as he could remember, he had never desired that the Diplomatic Body should select the locality wherein the Shah might take refuge, and he quite agreed with His Majesty's Government that, if this were to be admitted, it would amount to internationalizing the Persian question. He had, he believed, had in view the possibility of the Shah seeking refuge in a Legation other than the British or Russian, and in that case he thought that His Majesty should be protected by combined British and Russian guards, as no Legation except the above two possessed guards of its own nationality. This was a question which perhaps might be taken into consideration.

I told his Excellency that the misunderstanding must be laid entirely to my door, and I must have carried away from the interview which we had last month on the subject an incorrect impression. I would, however, lose no time in rectifying it. As to the protection of the Shah by combined guards placed at a foreign Legation, I would communicate with you on the subject.

I confess I am puzzled as to how I could have misinterpreted M. Isvolsky's former observations, but I did not think that it was necessary to discuss the point, as his Excellency fell in with the views of His Majesty's Government.

The suggestion that the Shah should be protected by British and Russian guards during his asylum in a foreign Legation might, I should think, give rise to some difficulties, and an Anglo-Russian guard might be declined by a third Legation; but I did not pursue the matter, as I trust that you will kindly give me your views on the question.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[3861]

No. 155.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 3, 1908.

I HAVE received the following Confidential telegram, No. 12, dated the 2nd instant, from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urumia:—

"In a long conversation with me yesterday the Turkish Commissioner maintained the extreme claims of the Turks, stating that all Kurdistan, including, he said (in reply to a question from me), the inhabitants of the Kurd villages scattered about the Urumia plain, belonged to Turkey, although as to Soujboulak he had some doubts. On my warning him that the gravest complications might result from this frontier question which he seemed to treat so lightly, he replied, 'please God nothing will happen.' He affected to believe the Persian Government was making ready to attack the Turks, but I assured him that nothing of the kind was in contemplation, so far as I knew.

"The Russian Vice-Consul holds himself entirely aloof, but I do my best to soothe the Commissioners of the two parties, whose relations, judging by the way they abuse one another to me, seem to be becoming rather strained."

[3900]

No. 156.

The Persian Chargé d'Affaires to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 4.)

THE Persian Chargé d'Affaires presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith translation of a Circular telegram which he has received from his Excellency the Mushir-ed-Dowleh on the subject of the Turkish excesses in Persia.

Persian Legation, February 3, 1908.

[1563]

2 A

Inclosure in No. 156.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to the Persian Chargé d'Affaires.

(Translation.)

(Circular.)

(Telegraphic.)

[Received January 31, 1908.]

YOU are of course aware that, owing to frontier differences, Mohammad Fazel Pasha, with a number of Turkish troops, has been for some time past remaining at Passovah and Lahidjan, which districts are clearly Persian territory. The Perso-Turkish Commission which had been formed in the vicinity of the boundaries of Azerbaidjan for the purpose of removing this difference has borne no fruit owing to the evasion and want of co-operation of the Turkish officials. This year, when there was internal commotion in Azerbaidjan, the Turks availed themselves of the opportunity to renew their aggression into the Urumya and Sauj Bulagh districts. Among other things Mohammad Fazel Pasha instigated the Persian tribes to attack the villages surrounding Miandoab and Sauj Bulagh; they plundered more than 1 kroor (500,000) tomans worth of property belonging to the inhabitants of these villages, and have caused enormous losses to the revenue, the Customs, and to the subjects of the Imperial Persian Government.

Farman Farma, Governor-General of Azerbaidjan, set out for Sauj Bulagh, with the purpose of restraining the unruly Persian tribes from murder and plunder. Mohammad Fazel Pasha, seeing in the departure of Farman Farma an obstacle to his aims and aggressions, incited 20,000 tribesmen (among whom were a number of Turkish regular troops and Turkish tribesmen) to besiege Sauj Bulagh. They cut the means of communication, and of sending supplies to Farman Farma and to the inhabitants of Sauj Bulagh.

Mohammad Fazel Pasha himself, with this force and a supply of arms and ammunition and six guns, proceeded from Passovah to Kussehkahriza and Agrighash, and finally went to Kahriza, which is at a distance of a quarter of a mile from Sauj Bulagh, and

As Farman Farma had no orders to make defence, or to oppose, he left Sauj Bulagh for Miandoab.

Considering that this action of Mohammad Fazel Pasha and his aggression into Persian territory has been entirely contrary to the Treaties existing between the two Governments and against international rights, the Imperial Persian Government has officially protested to the Turkish Embassy and to the other Missions in Tehran. I have written this for your information in order that you may communicate it to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the country to which you are accredited.

[3884]

No. 157.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 4.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 1st instant, relative to Turco-Persian frontier affairs.

India Office, February 3, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 157.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P.

February 1, 1908.

TURCO-RUSSIAN frontier.

Resident at Bagdad telegraphed the 25th ultimo as follows:—

"On the 23rd instant, 200 cavalry, 3 guns, and 200 boxes of ammunition left Bagdad for Khanikin. Report states that about 12,000 men have been collected on frontier near Amara by Vali of Pustiku. Pending arrival of Pertav Pasha it is thought

* This sentence cannot be properly decyphered. It can, however, be gathered from it that the Turkish Commander threatened to bombard the town.

[3984]

No. 159*.

Sir Edward Grey to Consul-General Cumberbatch.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 5, 1908.

A REPORT reaches us that steam-ship "Bigimalen" disembarked a very large quantity of arms and ammunition between the 22nd and 28th December at Beyrou, and that Turkish officers and men were sent on with them by train to Aleppo. You should telegraph any information you possess, especially as regards quantity disembarked and ultimate destination.

[1563]

2 A*

that Turks will not do anything definite. Turkish occupation of Sujbulak is reported by Consular Agent at Mosul, who also says that Turks have telegraphed for assistance to Vali of Mosul, as a result of arrival of 3,000 troops under Governor of Tabreez. It is said that Persian troops and tribesmen have left for Kasrashirin from Kermanshah. Vali of Pustiku and Sheikh of Mohammerah are said to be on very friendly terms."

[4082]

No. 158.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 5.)

(No. 22.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, February 5, 1908.

[TURCO-PERSIAN Frontier.]

A proposal has been made by Russian Ambassador at Constantinople that Consuls at Urumia should visit Soujboulak and ascertain exactly what has happened there.

If you should agree to instruct Mr. Wratislaw accordingly, Minister for Foreign Affairs would be willing to adopt this suggestion, which he considers a good one.

(Repeated to Constantinople and Tehran.)

[4061]

No. 159.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 5.)

(No. 37.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 5, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I inquired of His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah in regard to movements of Turkish troops reported by Consul-General at Bagdad. He reports, telegraphing from Kasr-i-Shirin, arrival at Khanikin of 200 boxes of ammunition, 3 guns, and 100 cavalry.

[2761]

No. 160.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 5, 1908.

I LAID before Secretary Sir E. Grey your letter of the 24th ultimo relative to the proposal that the Indo-European Telegraph Department should obtain control of the Persian telegraph line between Ahwaz and Borazjoon.

I am directed to state, for the information of Mr. Secretary Morley, that Sir E. Grey concurs in the suggestions put forward by Mr. Kirk in the Memorandum inclosed in your letter with regard to the lines on which it would be desirable to approach the Persian Government in the matter.

Before, however, sending instructions to Mr. Marling, it will be necessary to obtain the sanction of the Treasury to the charge of half the expenditure to British funds.

I am accordingly to inquire whether Mr. Morley is able to furnish any information as to the approximate cost of the proposed survey and temporary repair of the line, and also as to the probable cost of its maintenance when put into proper working order.

Sir E. Grey would be glad to be favoured with an early reply to this letter, in order that no time may be lost in approaching the Treasury.

I am, &c.

(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[4084]

No. 161.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 6.)

(No. 8.)

(By Post.)

Paris, February 5, 1908.(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

PERSIA.

I asked the Political Director to-day how soon I should receive the instructions to be given to the French Financial Adviser.

He said that they were being prepared, and that M. Bizot would start for Tehran on the 20th instant at the latest, and would go thither direct.

[4198]

No. 162.

Mr. Cumberbatch to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 6.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Beyrout, February 6, 1908.

ON 23rd December I telegraphed to Sir N. O'Connor that the transport mentioned in your telegram of 5th February had arrived here on 21st December. She landed a General and forty officers in charge of six batteries of artillery, and a chest of Mauser rifles. They set out from here to go *via* Aleppo to Bagdad.

[4335]

No. 163.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 7.)

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 7, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

With reference to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 22 of the 5th instant, the proposal made by the Russian Ambassador was only that some one should be delegated by the Consuls to find out exactly what has taken place at Soujboulak, but in the present excited condition of Shiah and Sunni tribes, the Delegates might incur some personal risk. Besides, the Persians will even by this be led to believe that we are on the point of interfering on their behalf.

(Confidential.)

If we allow the matter to drop, I hardly think M. Zinoviev, to whom I have spoken, will return to the subject.

[4330]

No. 164.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 7.)

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 7, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

My telegram No. 37 of the 5th instant.

Captain Haworth reports arrival at Khanikin, on 4th instant, of 150 more cavalry on mules. The only news he has of the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh's reported activity is that he is with his troops at Bedrai.

[4344]

No. 165.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 7.)

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 7, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 22 of the 5th instant.

No news of Russian Ambassador's proposal has been received by Russian Minister, who thinks with me that, just at moment when Commission has begun its sittings, it

is undesirable for Consuls to leave Urumia. If desired, M. de Hartwig thinks he could send a Secretary from Tabreez Consulate-General, but, as main facts are incontestable, he doubts necessity of fuller information respecting events at Soujboulak.

There might be danger on the journey from Urumia to Soujboulak.

[4082]

No. 166.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 31.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 7, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Please refer to telegram from St. Petersburg No. 22 of 5th instant.

We agree to Russian proposals as to Urumia Consuls visiting Soujboulak, and you should instruct Mr. Wratislaw accordingly, informing him also that his Russian colleague will be instructed in the same sense.

[4861]

No. 167.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.**

(No. 53.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 7, 1908.

I TOLD Count Benckendorff to-day that we had information that eighteen large guns and thirteen train-loads of ammunition and arms were being sent from Beyrout towards the Persian frontier, and from other sources I heard of great preparations which looked as if the Turks intended military operations on a large scale.

If this was so, the results might extend and involve British interests, and our hand might be forced, and we should have to consider what measures ought to be taken.

Should this happen, I would inform the Russian Government in advance. It would be well for them to consider what measures they would be prepared to take, so that we might arrange to act simultaneously.

At present, I had no suggestions to make as to further action, but I thought it well to let the Russian Government know in advance that the situation seemed to be getting worse.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[4505]

No. 168.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 36.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 8, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urmia, No. 13 of the 7th instant:—

"The Commission are again talking of adjourning to Soujboulak, and nothing has been done since the meeting of the Commission on the 3rd instant, when Tahir Pasha presented a Memorandum enumerating the Treaties on which he relied, and laying particular stress on that of 1639.

(Confidential.)

"Is there any truth in the statement, which the Russian Vice-Consul informs me he has received in a telegram from his Government, to the effect that the British and Russian Governments have decided to insist on the meetings of the Commission being attended by the two Consular officers and on their having a decisive voice?"

[1563]

* Also to Sir A. Nicolson (No. 32).

2 B

[4512]

No. 169.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 40.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 8, 1908.

OIL Syndicate. Arabistan situation.

Telegram from Captain Lorimer states that during past two months things have been quiet at oil camps, and that it is entirely to the apprehensions inspired in the Khans that this result is due. In spite of a partial and temporary improvement, the Bakhtiari guards are still deficient in numbers.

The Khans profess ignorance of the action taken at the Legation by their agents in November, and disavow their proceedings.

Captain Lorimer asks permission to order payment of suspended November instalment when he thinks right moment has come, first endeavouring to secure a settlement of claims for compensation. He has advised Oil Syndicate's Manager to make arrangements for payment as usual of February instalment.

Most satisfactory solution of difficulty as to guards would be for Syndicate themselves to pay guards direct, and I have suggested to Captain Lorimer that opportunity might be used to induce Khans to allow this.

[4513]

No. 170.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 41.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 8, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines. Please see your telegram No. 22 of the 25th ultimo.

Instructions in the sense of my telegram No. 26 of the 22nd ultimo have been received by Russian Minister, and as soon as is practicable we shall take action. M. de Hartwig will give me a statement in regard to the Khaf-Nasratabad section similar to a detailed statement of the conditions of our control over the Tehran-Meshed line with which I propose to furnish him.

We have signallers from India on the former section, attached to Consulates, but at present the Indo-European Telegraph Department has no connection with it.

By whom, that is to say, by the Indo-European Telegraph Department or the Indian Telegraph Department, is it now proposed that Russian obligations in regard to it should be formally accepted? (Please refer to proposal to vest responsibility in latter in Government of India's despatch No. 78 of the 9th May, § 7, inclosed in your despatch No. 126 of the 22nd July last.)

[4508]

No. 171.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 8.)

(No. 42.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 8, 1908.

TEHRAN-KHANIKIN telegraph line.

M. de Hartwig is unaware that anything definite has been agreed upon in regard to the cession of our rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line, for which he has received instructions to arrange.

Please refer to Sir A. Nicolson's despatches Nos. 344 and 428 of last year. Is anything more definite contemplated than the exchange of Memoranda dated respectively the 23rd June and the 24th August?

[4344]

No. 172.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 8, 1908.

SOUBBOULAK incident on Turco-Persian frontier.

In view of M. de Hartwig's opinion, reported in your telegram No. 39 of yesterday, it is unnecessary for you to instruct Consul as suggested in my telegram No. 31 of yesterday, if you consider such action inadvisable.

[4514]

No. 173.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 9.)

(No. 25.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, February 9, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines.

Your telegram No. 28 of the 25th ultimo and my despatches of last year, Nos. 428 and 439 of the 26th and 29th August.

M. Isvolsky concurs in suggestion that British and Russian Representatives should approach Persian Government in this matter, the transaction being represented as one convenient for technical and economic reasons. It should also, he proposes, be made clear to the Persian Government that the obligation of keeping the lines in as good order as possible will be imposed on them by the development of telegraphic communication, and that it would greatly facilitate the upkeep and repairs of the lines if those for the Meshed-Tehran and Tehran-Khanikin sections were intrusted to the Russian Telegraph Administration, and those for southern sections of the Seistan line undertaken by the Indian Telegraph Department.

Mention is made of the Khanikin line, as he will wish to discuss all these three lines simultaneously with the Persian Government, and, in order to see clearly what obligations and rights are connected with the Khanikin line, he would like to see a copy of the Telegraph Convention of 1872. Once that point is clear the Persian Government can then be approached by the two Representatives at Tehran.

I might give M. Isvolsky a copy of Article XVI of the above-mentioned Convention, which refers to the right of the British Administration to resume charge of the Khanikin section, but it would be desirable to inform him of the date on which and the reasons why the Persian authorities were placed in charge. He might also be given a copy of the Convention of 1865. In order to anticipate any action of Germany in securing rights after 1925 Russia will probably be anxious to take over charge of line as soon as possible.

I might, if you wish it, suggest to M. Isvolsky that the Tehran-Khanikin line should be dealt with separately from the other two lines. This would perhaps be more convenient.

[4537]

No. 174.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 10.)

(No. 57.)

Sir,

Constantinople, February 5, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, for the information of the General Staff of the War Office, a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on affairs in the Mush plain,* and on the Turco-Persian frontier question.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONNOR.

* See Asiatic Turkey Volume, January to June, 1908, No. 57.

Inclosure 1 in No. 174.

Vice-Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 23.)

Sir,

Van, December 14, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your Excellency's information, a report on the districts passed through on my recent journey, and a result of the information obtained. I would be greatly obliged if your Excellency would allow it to be forwarded to the military authorities, as I hope the information it contains may interest them.

The all-absorbing interest in this vilayet at the present is the Turco-Persian frontier question, and the idea which seems to prevail amongst all classes is that Russia is the opponent, and not Persia.

From the lack of means at my disposal here of knowing what has passed or is passing at Constantinople with respect to this question, I am only able to surmise what is probably the truth, but I believe that between 1842 and the Russo-Turkish war, 1877-8, there were negotiations and Mixed Commissions at various intervals between Turkey and Persia on this question in which Turkey certainly seems to have made no very decided attempt to have the affair definitely settled.

Since 1878 the matter seems to have lain entirely dormant until some time about 1904, when the following events seem to have awakened an interest among the Turks:—

The Russian plan for an extension of their railway to Julfa.

The Russian road to Tabreez, &c.

The appointment of a Russian Vice-Consul at Urmia, and the wholesale conversion of the Assyrians in Persia to the Russian Church.

If a railway were required to be constructed from Russia to Bagdad or the Persian Gulf, I am under the impression that the easiest trace for it to follow would pass through Lahijan and the Vezney Pass; while if a railway or cart road were to be constructed from Bayezid to Bagdad, it would have to follow through this same pass.

Therefore the importance of this pass to the Turks is apparent, and I have no doubt that the Turks discovered this in 1904, with the result reported in my No. 21 of the 1st October, 1907.

I may add that among Tahir Pasha and the members of his Commission, also the higher officials here, the Ferik and Vali, &c., whilst they realize that it is with Russia they are dealing and not with Persia, they are perfectly convinced that England will support them against Russia, while from conversations I have had with Mr. Wratislaw and the Russian Vice-Consul of Urmia, it appears to me that your Excellency's intentions, as voiced through His Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez to the Turkish Commission, do not support this idea.

From what I can judge of the Turkish ideas here, they seem to think, since the Russo-Japanese war and her internal troubles, that Russia is weak, and they (the Turks) would be glad to fight her now and pay off some of their old scores. Thus it is possible that a strong attitude on the part of Turkey over this frontier question is not merely bluff, as she realizes that the districts occupied are of vital importance to her, and she will be prepared to fight for them. That this is true is proved by the determined way in which the Central Government is giving orders to be prepared to mobilize every available man in the vilayet, in spite of the warning of the Vali that such a measure will cause a famine. I am also told that new pattern quick-firing guns are to be supplied to the IVth Army Corps.

The Ferik told me unofficially that all they wanted was the money, and that they hoped to get from England or Germany.

I also inclose a Report on affairs at Mush,* which I humbly request that your Excellency will forward to the military authorities. Although intended for the War Office, I venture to suggest that it may interest your Excellency, as showing a possible reason for the undue oppression by the Turks of the Armenians in the Mush plain.

These two inclosures, being the more interesting parts of the Report of my recent journey, I forward forthwith; the remainder, with the maps, sketches, &c., I will forward when finished. Your Excellency's cypher telegram of the 11th November,

* See Asiatic Turkey Volume, January to June, 1908, No. 57.

1907, advises me that at present the journey to the Lahijan and Vezney districts, advocated in my No. 21 of the 1st October, 1907, is not advisable. I would be much gratified if your Excellency would inform me whether I am to understand by this that at some future date, say the coming spring, I shall be permitted to make this journey, or whether I am to consider this refusal as final.

I have, &c.
(Signed) B. DICKSON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 174.

Report by Vice-Consul Dickson on his recent Journey through Turco-Persian territory.

THE four districts of Morgawar, Bordesor, Torgawar, and Baradost, lately occupied by the Turkish troops, form a prominent feature in the present Perso-Turkish frontier dispute. On looking at the map one sees that there is a large chain of mountains, running from north to south, which might be called the east wall of Kurdistan, and carries what the Persians propose as the boundary. About 5 miles east of this chain is another and lower one, also running north to south, and forming the western boundary of the Urmia plain.

Between these two parallel chains are the four above-mentioned districts, separated from each other by very slight watersheds running east to west.

These plains lie in a long strip of flat, rich, open valley, some 80 miles long and 5 or 6 miles wide. This valley or plain is divided transversely by four main rivers, coming from the high Kurdistan range, and flowing east across the plain. They force their way by gorges through the smaller or Urmia Plain range, and do not appear to be much better. Going south from Baradost, one crosses a few low hills, and descends into the lower plain of Torgawar, watered by the Nazlu, or Baney Chai, and the Amboy or Rosa Chai.

This plain is extremely fertile, and, as far as I could make out, the majority of the villages here were Assyrian, the remainder being Bogzadi Kurds.

Here, the villages are larger, better built, and with fruit and vegetable gardens, and a general air of prosperity and comfort.

Continuing south from Torgawar, one crosses a slight watershed, and descends still lower to the plain of Dasht or Bordesor, watered by the Bordesor Chai, which after passing the eastern chain of hills, becomes the Urmia city, or Shehor Chai, and forms the water supply of Urmia.

This rich plain is occupied entirely by the Dasht or Bogzadi Kurds, who have a few large villages, each surmounted by a fortress, from which the local Chief or Bey defies his enemies.

Bordesor is the smallest of the four districts, but as its inhabitants depend for their living more on plunder than on work, this fact causes them no serious inconvenience. From the Bordesor Plain one descends again gradually to the large fertile Morgawar Plain, watered by the Barandus Chai, a large river. This Morgawar Plain is full of villages, and very fertile. The villages mostly belong to the sedentary Horiki Kurds, but there are also several Assyrian, and a few Rayah Kurds, and Bogzadi.

As these villages have a high range of mountains on the west, and only a small chain of hills on the east, it follows that the roads east into Persia and Urmia are easy and much frequented, while such tracks as exist in the westerly direction into Turkey are bad, and seldom used, with the exception of the road from Baradost to Diza of Gawar, which last year, and before these events, was the trade route by which the people of Gawar obtained their stores.

The inhabitants of the districts are principally Kurds, with a sprinkling of Assyrian villages, the Kurds being divided into Shekaka, Bogzadi, Horiki, and Rayahs.

The Shekaka, a part of the large tribe of Shekaka, occupy many villages on the slopes north and north-east of Baradost, and the hilly country called Somai. They have for their Chief Ishmael Agha, of Suranawa. They are a turbulent lot, more pastoral than agricultural, but wholly brigand, and are continually raiding the villages in the north of Urmia plain and Salmas, and on the Turkish side in Gawar and Bashkala. They are a rather finer fighting type than most Kurds, are well armed, and generally well horsed, and are much feared by the Persians and other Kurds.

The Horiki form another large and powerful tribe, extending as far south as Mosul, and numbering some 20,000 armed men. This tribe is divided into two large divisions, viz., nomad and sedentary.

The sedentary occupy villages all round Morgawar, and the hills inclosing it. Their Chief is Korim Khan Agha, who lives at Norgi, in Morgawar. He is a good type of Kurd, with the regulation number of wives, and seventeen sons, and is very wealthy. His village is occupied by a detachment of Turkish troops, but he declares himself to be Persian notwithstanding, though asserting that "if all the Turks were like Tahir Pasha, he would not mind being Turk." In fact, he concerns himself very little with politics. His villages are very fairly peaceful and quiet, in spite of frequent quarrels among themselves. The villagers are agricultural, but own considerable flocks of sheep in addition.

The nomad section of the Horiki winter, I am told, round Mosul, and come up to the highlands round Morgawar, Torgawar, and Baradost, and also to districts south and west of these, during the summer. Their Chief is Haji Dervish Agha, a brother of Korim Agha.

Piro Agha, who played a leading part in the sack of Mawana, was formerly Chief of the nomad Horiki, but was deposed, and has since, with his following of about 200 men, been a sort of freebooter. From what I gathered, the nomad Horiki are a somewhat wild lot.

The Bogzadi Kurds (or the sons of Boga) are a set of disreputable cut-throats. The name implies, not a compact tribe or "ashiret," but rather a heterogeneous collection of large villages of armed Rayah Kurds, each with a Chief calling himself Bey, owning no authority, and generally at war with one another, and with their neighbours, and incessantly plundering in the Urmi and Gawar plains and other districts. They have no particular district, unless one calls Dasht or Bordesor their head-quarters, but are scattered here and there, as far north as Khoi, each village being quite independent of its neighbours.

Being Sunnis by religion, they are detested by the Persians on this account, as well as for their thieving qualities. Nominally, they used to pay some sort of tax or tribute to some one or other of the Persian Government employés, but, as they informed me, they have already, during the three months of Turkish occupation, paid to the Turks more than thrice the amount that they have ever paid in times past to the Persians. Hence it appears that they were not much bothered by the visits of the tax-collector.

The question of taxes, tithes, rents, &c., in Persia is so complicated that I will not enter into it.

The Assyrians in these districts have a much easier lot than those in Turkey; there being no Eastern or Christian question in Persia, or at least none of any importance, may explain this, or perhaps the fact that the Assyrians, unlike the Armenians, have no national aspirations, may be the reason. At any rate they are much more free, and being allowed to carry arms they can protect themselves and their property, and pretend to be men. Some eight or ten years ago they were armed by the Persian authorities with the official rifle and cartridge, or at all events obtained the weapon from somewhere. It is difficult to arrive at the truth about anything in this country, and various explanations of the existence of those rifles are correct. Some say that they were armed so as to form a sort of frontier guard. Others, that it was to protect Urmi; but probably the true reason was that as these villages all belong to various Persian magnates in Urmi, to whom they pay rent and tribute, these magnates saw the advantage of protecting them from being pillaged by the Kurds; anyhow, they are well armed, and thanks to that, and to the fact that all the Assyrian villages combine to resist the Kurds, while the Kurds have so many internal quarrels that prevent them from combining against the Assyrians, the result is that the Assyrians have up till lately been the strongest power in these districts. Indeed, though they are not in the habit of attacking the Kurds, they have almost invariably got the best of the fights, when attacked.

From what I can gather, they have been left alone pretty much, of late years, with the result that they have prospered considerably, and their villages show a marked difference from those on the Turkish side of the frontier.

Their houses are generally built of stone, and in some cases two-storied, while they have clean rooms with carpets and rugs, and often pictures of sorts, usually religious, while round their houses are vegetable gardens, trees, &c.

Altogether, they have a general air of prosperity and comfort that one never sees in Turkey.

It is true that most of the houses of any importance are built like fortresses, with the windows high up, and about 6 inches square, the doors small and solid, and the roofs fortified and loopholed; but this is a style of architecture much in vogue in this part of Persia, and entirely necessary in the neighbourhood of Shekak or Bogzadi Kurds. The Bogzadi villages are also fortified, on account of their incessant internal quarrels, but the Shekaks, who are seldom molested by any one, do not require this precaution.

The Assyrians are divided up into many religious parties, and change about from one to the other with a conscience made easy by the inducements, pecuniary or otherwise, offered by the advocates of various creeds. Thus, in most villages one finds, Nestorians, Chaldeans (*i.e.*, Roman Catholics), Russian Orthodox, and American Presbyterian of some denomination, besides protégés of the English mission. They may have their petty jealousies, and differences of opinion among themselves, but they combine against the Kurds.

There are several villages of Rayah Kurds, who farm the land belonging to various rich proprietors in Urmi and other places. The Sheikh of Shamsdinan owns much property in these districts, and before the invasion of Urmi by his grandfather, Sheikh Obedullah, he owned much more, which the Persians confiscated, without the Turks, so far as I am aware, entering any protest against the proceeding. Sheikh Mahmud Saddin, a cousin of the late Sheikh, lives at Naychellen, in Baradost, and talked to me very frankly. He informed me that no one in these districts who was not on outlaw wished the Turks to come, that they were Persians, and although the Persian might not be the best of Governments, they would rather have anything than the Turks.

He may be taken as probably representative of the opinion of all the Rayah Kurds, as he is an important Sheikh in these parts.

Thus, the whole of the inhabitants of these districts are either Sunni Kurds, or Assyrians; there are no Persians, and this gives the district quite a Turkish character. The languages, customs, habits, and so on, of the people, are those characteristic of Turkish subjects, quite different to what one finds in the Urmia Plain, only more prosperous than is the rule in Turkey.

I have tried to explain what a turbulent lot of cut-throats those Bogzadi are, always fighting among themselves, and raiding the peace-loving Persian. I will now turn to some of their intrigues.

Some years ago, some of these Bogzadi had a grudge against the American mission at Urmi, which resulted in the cowardly murder of Mr. Labaree, an American, in 1901. After various proceedings, the culprits, who had at one time been under arrest, and at Tehran, escaped, or anyhow got back to Bordesor, which is, one might say, the stronghold of these Kurds. This, and many other atrocities and robberies committed by these Kurds, were given as the reason why Medjidie Sultaneh, an important Persian official in Urmia, assembled a force of Persian troops at that place, for the purpose of punishing these Kurds.

As I mentioned in my No. 2 of the 1st February, 1907, these Bogzadi, in July 1906, petitioned Tahir Pasha, then Vali of Van, for protection against the Persian Government, giving as reasons that they were Sunnis and Turks, and were being oppressed on account of their religion by the Shia Persians and Christian Assyrians; also, they asserted that they were Kurds, and Turks, and wished to be Hamidiéh. Tahir Pasha, on referring the matter to Constantinople, was told that the *status quo* was to be preserved. He took Dervish Pasha's reading of the Turkish claim, which line includes Morgawar, Torgawar, Baradost, Bordesor, Somai, and passing up through the Salmas Plain by Kuhna Sheher, goes up the Dishovan Dere to Surava Dag, where it joins the frontier settled by Treaty of Berlin, Article LX. This line was shown to me by Tahir Pasha on his maps, and I have copied it on mine.

Thus, Tahir Pasha accepted the Petition of the Bogzadi, and acknowledged that they were Turkish subjects; about November 1906, zaptiehs and a detachment of infantry were sent to the districts, and occupied Morgawar.

It is difficult to obtain accurate information about what actually took place then, as accounts differ, but what seems most probable is, that these troops occupied Kala Zova, in Morgawar; that they collected taxes; and that some Turkish force, probably some few zaptiehs, went as far as Bonde, within 5 miles of Urmi, where, in January 1907, they were attacked by Persian troops from Urmi, and had to retire, losing two zaptiehs killed. The village of Bonde is in the valley of the Bordesor, or Sheher Chai, where it passes by a gorge through the line of hills dividing Urmi Plain from the disputed districts, and which carries Dervish Pasha's line. The village is Sunni

and Kurd, and is employed by the Bogzadi as an advanced base for their pillaging raids in the Urmi Plain.

After this reverse at Bonde, the Turks reinforced their detachments on the frontier, and in the spring they had detachments at Kala Zova, Bajirka, Nori (in Shamsdinan), and Disa (in Gawar). When Medjidie Sultaneh and his punitive force set out from Urmi, the Bogzadi, now considering themselves as Turkish subjects, got into communication with Enroulla Bey, the Turkish Staff Officer in charge of this section of the frontier and an arch-conspirator. He promised them substantial aid as is shown in the letter to their Chiefs, which, curiously enough, fell into Turkish-Persian hands by accident.

For the sake of convenience, I give a translation:—

"I have received your letter of the 6th July, 1907. Two battalions of infantry, with six guns, under the command of the Mir Ali (Colonel) of Van, have started. This morning we leave Bashkala for Gawar; and from there we will come by the Bordesor Chai road. We will not leave a single Persian soldier. You must keep them waiting three or four days longer.

"When the battalions arrive at Gawar send me a letter, perhaps there may be some new circumstance. The order that I had not yet received has at last arrived. You will see in what a position the Persian troops will find themselves. Until (? when) the troops from Van arrive perhaps I may arrange something else, for such are the orders that I have received.

"My salutations to Bodr Khan Bey, Mahmud Sahib, Fadj Bey, and the other Beys. It is said that Jonghis Khan Bey is in the Persian camp. Is this true?"

(Then follows the seal and signature of Enroulla Erkani Harbe.)

There is little doubt that there has been intriguing on the part of the Turks in these districts, and I am inclined to believe that the Turkish authorities have employed Sherif Bey, Chief of the Shekifti Shokaks, and a Kaimakam of Hamidie, to further their intrigues, as his agents have been passing to and fro among the Persian Shokaks and the Kurds and Bogzadi villages round Salmas during this year, whereas in former years they used only to come over to pillage.

At Urban, a village north of the Salmas Plain, is a family of important Sheikhs, and from those I learned that the son of Sherif Bey has been in the locality, and also that in September 1907 the Sunnis of Salmas had sent a telegram to the Sultan asking for protection, and that they might be made Turkish subjects.

This telegram has been sent on by the Porte to Tahir Pasha for him to deal with.

From what I gathered among the various Kurds in these villages, they have a very false impression of the lot of Turkish subjects. Some think that they will be enrolled as Hamidieh, and receive guns, ammunition, uniform, decoration, &c., and will be allowed free licence to pillage the rich Christian villages, who, when they become Turkish, will be disarmed. Others, the quiet and more respectable Kurds, imagine that, being Sunnis under a Sunni Government, they will have complete protection from the raiding and other disturbing causes from which many of them have suffered considerably this year on account of the Persian Enjuman, the civil war at Khoi, Salmas, Maku, &c.

There is no doubt that the Turkish emissaries would paint their prospects as rosy a hue as possible.

While I was at Bashkala, Tahir Pasha informed me unofficially that these districts belonged to Turkey, as was incontestably shown by Dervish Pasha's map; that the land had been appropriated by Persian Notables of Urmi, who did not now like to lose it. He continued that the Turks did not want the land, but did want to govern and control the Kurds in those districts and the surrounding hills, and to prevent them from raiding the Turkish districts of Gawar, Bashkala, &c.; that the inhabitants, being Sunni Moslems, were naturally subjects of the Sultan.

Dervish Pasha's line follows the crest of the small hills west of Urmi northwards, till it reaches the Nazlu Chai; it then turns east, following the course of the Nazlu Chai to Lake Urmi, after which it follows up the lake shore some 13 miles, then turns north-west across a plain up to the Agvan Dag, which it follows till it turns north to Salmas. Thus this line entirely cuts off Urmi from the north.

Tahir Pasha explained to me that though all this territory was really Turkish, they would probably make a concession, so as to let the line from the Nazlu Chai follow the watershed of Sheikh Basit Dag to Aghvan Bagh, thus giving the Turks all

the Somai, and the hilly country of the Shekaks, leaving the plains to the east to Persia, and not cutting off Urmi from the north.

This is really all that the Turks want so as to obtain their road from Kirkuk to Bayazid, as mentioned in the inclosure of my No. 21 of the 1st October, 1907.

Tahir Pasha also told me that they would probably also occupy the districts of Somai and Chairay in Salmas, though no steps had yet been taken. Whilst I was in the Salmas district, Sheikh Allaadin of Urban, who was one of the organizers of the telegram sent to the Sultan in September 1907, told me that a messenger had come to him the day before from Ishmael Agha of Suranava, chief of the Sheikhs of the Somai, informing him that he had a letter from Sherif Bey (the man I mentioned as being used as an emissary of the Turks), in which the writer asked whether, if he occupied Somai on behalf of the Turks, Ishmael Agha would resist or not.

Ishmael had replied that he was content with the Persians, but would not resist the Turks.

Now from this, and from Tahir Pasha's uncertainty about occupying Somai at present, it seems to me that he was waiting to gain over the Shekaks to the Turkish cause, before occupying the district.

There are two reasons for this:—

1. Somai is an extensive and hilly district, extending from Salmas down to the Nazlu Chai, and the Shekaks, who inhabit it, are a large and powerful tribe. Ishmael Agha of Suranava, the Chief of the southern section, has been friendly with the Persia Government. In fact, he represented the Persian Government in Baradost, collecting taxes and settling disputes, &c., until the Turks occupied it last year. These Shekaks, who are about the best fighters of all the Kurds, and are well armed, would cause much trouble if the Turks occupied their country by force and against their will.

2. Jaffar Agha, Chief of the Abdewi, of the northern section of Somai Shekaks, at Chairay, was treacherously murdered by the Persians at Tabreez in 1905. Simco Agha, his brother, with a large number of his men, then came over to the Turks and claimed protection. Tahir Pasha, then Vali of Van, gave these Shekaks some land at Sel Kelissa, near Kheshab, some 30 miles east of Van, and befriended them greatly. The late Ali Bey, when he displaced Tahir Pasha as Vali of Van, had some difference with Simco, with the result that Simco and his people returned last spring to Persia, and joined forces with the Jellali and Aroshi Kurds, of the Khan of Maku. They made war on the Enjuman of Khoi and Salmas, and defeated them with great slaughter after a three days' battle at Zoveva, near to Khoi. After this, Simco was made Governor of the district of Kotur by the Khan of Maku, on behalf of the Shah, and he is now established at Kotur, where he collects all the taxes for his own pocket, lives in great state, and periodically raids the villages in Salmas and Khoi Plains, when he is in need of money, taking their sheep as a punishment for their not accepting the Shah, &c.

He informed me that he had been promised by the Shah (*i.e.*, by the Khan of Maku) that next spring he would be reinstalled in his own country of Chairay Somai, and also that he was ready to resist Turkish occupation to the last man.

He is the beau-ideal of a Kurd brigand, his men being devoted to him, and, if they meant business, could give a great deal of trouble to the Turks in Somai.

On the other hand, he is a great admirer of Tahir Pasha, to whom he is devoted; and curiously enough I hear to-day that Tahir Pasha, who had left Bashkala with the intention of coming to Van, has been stopped on the way at Khoshab, and ordered to return to Bashkala. The Pasha, however, instead of going direct to Bashkala, which is one day's journey, is making a long detour by Sorai and Kotur, to Salmas and so to Bashkala. This is a detour of some ten days, and passes through the districts where the Turks are now intriguing, but which they have not yet occupied. *En route* he will meet with Simco at Kotur.

Tahir Pasha has an exceedingly pleasing personality, and very easily gains the hearts of Kurds. I shall be surprised if, by a few promises, he does not gain Simco over to the Turkish cause.

Returning now to the tale of the Turkish aggression in the disputed districts.

I will not enter into the details of the campaign, as I understand that His Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez was sent to Urmi so as to inform the Embassy at Constantinople of what was passing in those districts, but will roughly outline the story, as I obtained it from various Turkish military sources.

It appears that Mejidie Sultaneh sent a detachment of 500 men and a gun to

occupy Jerma, in the hills above Bordesor, before he himself, with his main body, had left Urmi. On the 21st June this detachment was attacked at Kasriki, *en route*, by the Bogzadi, and severely repulsed; it sustained some 200 casualties, and retired to Hilori. After this fight between the Persians and the Bogzadi on the 21st June, I am creditably informed that Mahmoud Pasha, Ferik of Van, received a telegram from Enroulla Bey, saying that the Persians had attacked the Turkish troops in Morgawar, and that there were many casualties, &c. On receipt of this, the Ferik communicated, I believe, with the Mushir at Erzingan and at Constantinople; one or two days later Enroulla Bey wired, I understand, to the Ferik that his first telegram was erroneous, and that the fight had been one between Kurds only. However, it appears that the Ferik had already made such strong representations at Erzingan and Constantinople as to result in the orders to mobilize, that I reported in my cypher telegram of the 29th July.

Meantime, Mejdide Sultaneh, having heard of the defeat of his advanced guard, was induced by this, and by various other reasons, to leave Urmi at once with his main force, though they were not as yet organized, and the 2nd July he encamped at Tullo in Morgawar with some 1,500 men, and five antediluvian brass guns. Here he constructed a mud wall or barricade round his camp, which the Turks later on called a fort; a large proportion of his force were without rifles or ammunition. This defect was made good on the 12th July by the arrival of 600 rifles and some ammunition from Tabreez. In the meanwhile he had been negotiating, with the object of gaining time, with Bogzadi, who had occupied the slopes to the south-west of his camp, and just north of the village of Bordesor. Mejdide Sultaneh had been reinforced by the addition of several bands of Kurds and Assyrians from Torgawar.

On the 19th July, the Turkish troops promised by Enroulla Bey arrived at Bordesor (two battalions and six mountain guns), and the Kurds attacked the outposts of the Persian force. Some skirmishing took place, the Turkish troops taking part, and Mejdide Sultaneh sent an envoy to inform the Commandant of the Turks (Mir Ali Yaver Bey) that he had no orders to fight the Osmanlis, that he was on a punitive expedition against the Kurds, Persian subjects, and that he was surprised to find Turkish troops on Persian territory. To this the Turks replied that Torgawar, Morgawar, Bordesor, Baradost, and Somai were Turkish territory, that the Turkish troops were there under orders from Constantinople, that Mejdide Sultaneh's force was not sent by the Persian Government, but by the Urmi Enjuman, and was in fact a revolutionary force; further, they wished to know why Mejdide Sultaneh had been erecting forts on Turkish territory, and warned him that they had instructions to turn him out of the same.

After some discussion, the Turks allowed the Persians an armistice of three hours in which to retire, but some skirmishing began among the irregulars, and this caused the Turks to begin bombarding the Persian camp, after two hours had elapsed. On this the Persians retired pell-mell, the Turks and Bogzadi following them and completing the rout. The Persians lost all their camp equipment, one gun, and some 150 killed and wounded.

Mejdide Sultaneh and his Persians retired on Urmi, but the Assyrians, who seem to have fought well, to their villages in Torgawar. The next morning it would appear that the Bogzadi thought the occasion opportune for the paying off of some of their old scores on the Assyrians, and advanced on Mavana, the principal village of Torgawar.

Piro Agha and his Horiki followers had been on the Persian side, and were with the Assyrians when the Bogzadi approached Mavana. The Assyrians prepared to resist them, but Piro (from all accounts with truth) informed them that the Turkish troops were also with the Bogzadi, and the sight of the Turkish guns decided the Assyrians to retire, which they did, to Urmi. On their retirement Piro and his Kurds commenced pillaging the village of Mavana, in which they were assisted by the Bogzadi, and later by the Turkish troops. There is good reason to believe that, in spite of the Turkish denials, there was a certain amount of the violation of women, &c., which occurs on these occasions in this country.

Yaver Bey, the Turkish Commandant, appears to have made at least some effort on his arrival in Mavana, to take the stolen booty from the Kurds. Piro Agha was made out to be the guilty party, and he was made a prisoner, *i.e.*, he remained a guest in the house of Yaver Bey for some twenty days. In the meantime, accounts of the affair, probably grossly exaggerated, seem to have been sent to Teheran, Constantinople, and to some of the European papers. The Turks, to clear their own consciences, it appears to me, caused an inquiry to be made concerning the sack of

Mavana, and the Kaimakam of Gawar was one of the officials charged with this duty. I have his authority for the statement that Piro Agha was made the scapegoat, and that Yaver Bey had, on his own initiative, given him a free pardon on the Sultan's birthday. The civil Government, adds the Kaimakam, were naturally angry that the man who was the cause of disgraceful charges being brought against the troops should thus go free, but yet, considering the circumstances of the Sultan's birthday, &c., they could hardly punish him.

This seems to be an excellent and Oriental way of getting the soldiers and Yaver Bey out of a nasty place; Piro Agha has gone to Mosul, and I am informed that five officers of the battalion that was at Mavana have been retired and have to go to Dashkala to be court-martialled for not having prevented the Kurds from sacking Mavana.

One of these five, a certain Yunbashi Sitke Effendi, asked me when I was in Bordesor to transmit 20*l.* to his wife in Van. He had only left Van three months before, and had received no pay since, and it is not usual for Turkish officers to have so much money about them.

From what I have heard in the villages in Hakiari and Gawar, there is no doubt that the Kurds in these disputed districts do a lot of damage in Turkey, though probably less than they do in the Urmi Plain, and since the occupation by the Turkish troops there has been comparative security in the neighbouring districts, except from the Somai Shekaks. But these troops are there to occupy the land, and to protect these same Kurds, not to keep them in order, and there is no precedent in Turkey to show that, once the disputed territory is accepted as Turkish, these Kurds will be kept in order, and everything tends to show that they will be worse than before, especially if they be made into Hamidie.

At the present moment the conditions in the disputed districts are deplorable. Last winter was a severe one, and the spring was late; these disturbances have caused many of the Assyrians to leave their villages and take refuge in Urmi, and their crops have been abandoned. This winter arrived forty-five to fifty days earlier than usual, with the result that many of the uncut cornfields are under the snow, and much corn has been left unthreshed.

Thus the distress, if the country had not been occupied by the Turks, would be severe enough; with the advent of the Turks villages have been occupied, villagers coerced to become loyal Turks, their houses taken by the soldiers, eggs, vegetables, firing, food, &c., all commandeered from the various villages. From all quarters in those occupied districts where I passed, I heard nothing but bitter complaints against the Turks; these complaints came principally from the Kurds, whose Chiefs had intrigued with the Turk, and who now find the position of hosts to the Turkish troops anything but a sinecure. The Turks, from my own observation, treat them as they deserve, *i.e.*, bully and beat them, and make them do all the dirty work.

In addition to this, they have made them pay taxes at a rate far higher than any they have ever dreamed of, and on the top of this they have not been allowed to do any pillaging, so that altogether their lot is a sad one from the Kurd point of view, which is not softened by the reflection that they have brought it on themselves.

I am informed that the soldiers have also been making money out of the situation by various means, such as trafficking in tithes, &c., and that most of them are in possession of ill-gotten gains of some sort or another.

(Signed) B. DICKSON,
Captain, R.F.A.

Van, December 14, 1907.

[4765]

No. 175.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 10.)

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Constantinople, February 10, 1908.

Following telegram, No. 14, dated the 8th instant, received from Consul-General at Urumia:—

"The attendance of the Russian Vice-Consul and myself at the Commission's meetings has, according to information which the former says he has received from one of the members of the Turkish Commission, been recommended in a telegram

to the Grand Vizier by Tahir Pasha because he finds progress with the Persian Commissioner, whom he calls an obstructive liar, impossible. Tahir Pasha said nothing about it when he called on me to-day. Our attendance as mere spectators seems to me useless."

I was told to-day by Tewfik Pasha that it was at the special request of Firman Firma, whose troops had committed grievous disorders and then deserted, that the Turkish General entered Soujboulak, that he is now at Lahijan within the contested zone, having retired with his troops as soon as order was restored in the town, and that categorical orders not to trespass on Persian territory have been given him by the Sultan. He found Soujboulak in a lamentable condition—signs of disturbances and plunder on every side, and many corpses in the streets.

The Sultan has recalled the Ambassador and the First Secretary of the Ottoman Embassy at Tehran, which has been placed in charge of the Consul at Batoum.

[4756]

No. 176.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 10.)

(No. 43.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 10, 1908.

ESCORT of Shiraz Consulate.

There is every indication that state of insecurity in Shiraz will last for some time, and reports from His Majesty's Consul show that disorders are likely to recur this spring. Do His Majesty's Government propose to retain indefinitely, or at least until situation improves, the Sowars who should have been relieved last November?

I venture to urge advisability of making arrangements of a more permanent character.

[2003]

No. 177.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 10, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit herewith copy of a Report by Mr. Vice-Consul Chick on the progress of German trade and shipping in the Persian Gulf,* together with comments thereon by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran† and His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire.‡

Sir E. Grey does not propose at present to take any action on Mr. Chick's Report, except as regards the urgent question of providing an efficient lighterage service at Bushire (see p. 11 of Mr. Chick's Report). You will notice that Mr. Marling considers the danger of the establishment of a foreign service to be both real and grave, and it is no doubt extremely desirable for British interests in the Gulf that this should be prevented. Sir E. Grey would be glad, therefore, if the Board of Trade would bring the matter to the notice of the steam-ship Companies named below, who appear to be those chiefly concerned, and induce them to give it their earnest consideration. If, after so doing, they declare themselves not prepared to undertake the service, it will be necessary to consider whether some other British firm should not be approached.

It is probable that a satisfactory solution of the question would bring with it greater regularity in the sailings of British vessels, a point on which Mr. Chick rightly lays stress.

The steam-ship Companies in question are:—

The Anglo-Algerian Steam-Ship Company.
The Bucknall Steam-Ship Lines.
The West Hartlepool Steam Navigation Company.
Messrs. Galloway, Weir, and Co.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

† No. 77.

* See Part XII, Inclosure in No. 417.

‡ See Part XII, No. 417.

[4804]

No. 178.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 11.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosure in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 26th December, relative to the increase of the Ahwaz guard.

India Office, February 10, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 178.

Major Cox to the Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Bushire, December 14, 1907.

FOLLOWING sent to Tehran:—

"A letter from Vice-Consul, Ahwaz, dated the 2nd December, has just been received in reply to my letter forwarding to him post copies of your telegram dated the 20th November, your telegram dated the 22nd November, and my telegram of the 27th November. Your telegram doubting adequacy of my *ad interim* proposals had not been received by him at time of writing. While he mentions that there is no limit in moderation to the number of guards who might be employed with advantage, he expresses view that [? with] twenty-four men proposed the endeavour aimed at can be secured. He is, however, inclined to recommend six additional infantrymen, that is, two for southern and four for northern locality.

"An attack in force, he adds, is highly improbable, and is a contingency which need not be contemplated. Ten more infantrymen will be necessary to meet Vice-Consul's recommendation, but he says that six of his own escort can be lent for the present, and suggests that as general outlook is more favourable, perhaps the dispatch of more men from India might be delayed pending the receipt by yourself and Government of India of his present written reports."

(Sent to Viceroy's camp.)

[4892]

No. 179.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 11.)

(No. 40.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Pera, February 11, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following from Mr. Wratislaw, Urmia, o. 15, dated to-day:—

"I learn that the American missionary here has received a letter from Soujboulak, in which it is stated that the Persian Governor-General evacuated the town under threat of attack. The letter, which is dated the 2nd instant, goes on to say that the Turkish General marched into the town the day following his withdrawal, and that the town has since been in the hands of the Ottoman troops, who are oppressing the inhabitants. As this native account is confirmed from reliable sources, I think it may safely be considered correct."

[4765]

No. 180.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 11, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN Frontier Commission. Please refer to your telegrams No. 36 of the 8th instant and No. 39 of the 10th instant.

Provided it is the Ottoman Government who make the suggestion, we consider it would be well for Mr. Wratislaw and his Russian colleague to attend meetings.

[4957]

No. 181.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 12.)

Sir,

India Office, February 11, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 7th December, 1907, inclosing a letter from the Treasury as to the advance of 300,000*l.* made in two instalments to the Persian Government by the Government of India in 1903 and 1904, I am directed to inform you that Mr. Secretary Morley is not aware of any circumstances that would render it inadvisable now to bring to the notice of Parliament the action which His Majesty's Government have taken in this matter.

As regards the adjustment between the Imperial and Indian Exchequers of any liabilities which may be consequent on the advance, it appears to him that it would be convenient if this Department and the Foreign Office were now to agree upon a simple procedure by which this adjustment might be regulated.

In the Memorandum of which a copy is inclosed a procedure is outlined which appears to be appropriate, and, subject to Sir Edward Grey's concurrence, the necessary action will be taken by this Department to give effect to it.

It will be observed that, under the arrangement proposed in the Memorandum, the Persian Government will not be charged interest on any instalment that is overdue for a shorter period than one year, and that the Foreign Office will not be called upon by this Department to meet any claim for a slight temporary loss of the kind mentioned in paragraph 3 of your letter under reply.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 181.

Memorandum.

THE debt due from the Persian Government having been practically converted into an annuity for twenty years payable on the 4th of April in each year from 1905 to 1924 inclusive (viz., 21,133*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.* in 1905 and 23,270*l.* 7*s.* in subsequent years), the Accountant-General at the India Office will prepare and keep up an "Arrears Account," showing the amount due from the Persian Government in consequence of any failure on its part to pay the instalments of the annuity in full at the right dates. He will debit to this account the amount by which the payment, if any, made by the Persian Government on the 4th April of each year falls short of 23,270*l.* 7*s.*, will add once a year interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum on the amount at debit, and will credit to the account any sums received in respect of arrears. He will append to the account a statement showing what portion of the arrears represents money that should have been paid to Indian revenues (with interest thereon) and what portion represents money that should be paid to the Imperial Bank (the amount so payable being one-fifth of all payments that should have been made in respect of the interest portion of the annuity, together with interest at 5 per cent. thereon added yearly). Once in three years he will send to the Foreign Office the account and appended statement, and the Foreign Office will pay to the India Office one-half of the amount by which the debt due to Indian revenues has been increased during the preceding three years. If the debt has been reduced, he will pay to the Foreign Office one-half of the amount of the reduction.

India Office, December 24, 1907.

[4956]

No. 182.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 12.)

Sir,

India Office, February 11, 1908.

IN reply to your letter of the 29th ultimo, I am directed to inform you that Mr. Marling is correct in assuming that the amount of interest due from the Persian Government at present is 13,601*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*, that being the interest portion of the instalment which should have been paid in April 1907. If, however, payment is not made until after the 4th April next, when it will have been a year overdue, it will be

necessary, in accordance with the arrangements proposed in this Office letter of the 11th February, to charge a year's interest on the sum mentioned, at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum.

I am to add that Mr. Morley concurs in the proposal to authorize Mr. Marling to inform the Persian Government, in writing, that His Majesty's Government consider that the Persian Government have accepted the conditions on which a suspension of the sinking fund was granted.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[4920]

No. 183.

Memorandum respecting British Interests in the Persian Gulf.

[NOTE.—Apart from Confidential correspondence, which is throughout expressly indicated by marginal notes, the following works have been consulted, both for purposes of reference and quotation:—

1. Bombay Records, volume 24.
2. Aitchison's Treaties, volume 10.
3. Low's "History of the Indian Navy."
4. Elisée Reclus' "Nouvelle Géographie Universelle."
5. Bennett's "Past and Present Connection of England with the Persian Gulf."
6. Lord Curzon's "Persia."
7. Foster's "Letters received by the East India Company from its servants in the East."
8. Barbier de Meynard's "Dictionnaire Géographique et Historique de la Perse."

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PART I.—GENERAL SUMMARY.

SOME five years ago a Minister of the Crown declared in Parliament that "the ascendancy of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf"—which he pronounced to be the foundation of British policy—"was not merely a question of theory, it was a statement of fact."

Exception has not infrequently been taken to the position of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf upon the ground that, without a shadow of right, she has constituted herself the general arbiter and guardian of that part of the world.

As such a description of our status—which appears to represent a view widely prevalent abroad—may not improbably be adopted by foreign Powers when increasing interest leads them to assume a definite attitude on this question, it appears desirable

* Separate Memoranda respecting "Quarantine" and the "Arms Traffic" are in course of preparation.

to collect, in a form convenient for reference, the salient facts of our historic association with the Gulf, and to summarize the views expressed by the Government of India and by successive Governments at home—views which are remarkable for unanimity, and which have now well-nigh acquired the sanction of an axiom in the direction of British policy.

It is with this purpose that the present Memorandum, which is merely a compilation of leading and largely *verbatim* extracts from authoritative sources,* has been drawn up.

The *de jure* position in the Persian Gulf is that of a sea open to the flag of all nations, the northern shores and territorial waters of which are included in the dominions of Persia, while its western and southern coasts are partially owned and partially claimed by Turkey, or are in the occupation of Arab tribes, who have entered into Treaty relationships of varying character, constituting a sort of veiled Protectorate, with Great Britain. The islands in the Gulf are owned either by Persia or by Arab Chiefs (in the case of Bahrein under British protection); but upon one of the Persian islands, viz., Kishm, Great Britain possesses a piece of land by virtue of an original grant from the Imam of Muscat, to whom the island once belonged. Outside the entrance to the Persian Gulf, but included in the same political system, are, on the northern shore of the Arabian Sea, the coasts of Persian Baluchistan, along which the overland wires of the Indo-European Telegraph Company run as far as Jask, where a reserve of territory exists under an Agreement concluded in 1887 between the British and Persian Governments, and where a detachment of Indian troops, who had previously been stationed there between the years 1879 and 1887, was re-established in January 1898 in consequence of the murder of a British telegraph official and the disturbed state of Persian Baluchistan. To the south of the entrance to the Persian Gulf, but within the sphere of its political influence, the Arab State of Muscat has for years been predominantly controlled by British influence; its trade is similarly in Anglo-Indian hands; and its Ruler has not merely for years been subsidized by the Government of India, but in 1891 entered into an Agreement with the British Government not to alienate any portion of his dominions to any other Power.

The *de facto* position upon the waters and on the shores of the Persian Gulf reflects a more positive British predominance than the preceding paragraph might indicate. In the early years of the nineteenth century the Slave Trade was rampant in the Gulf, and the vessels of the Indian Marine were engaged in a long and arduous struggle with the Arab pirates who infested its southern coasts. This conflict, which was conducted entirely by British agency and means, without any help from the Persian Government, resulted in the establishment of Treaty relations with the great majority of the Arab Chiefs, under which they bound themselves to observe perpetual peace and to refer all disputes to the British Resident at Bushire. The *par Britannica*, which has ever since, with rare exceptions, been maintained, is the issue of these arrangements and is the exclusive work of this country. Of similar origin were the soundings of the channels and the surveys of the shores of the Persian Gulf, which the navigators of all nations owe to the labours of a long line of naval officers of the Indian service. During the nineteenth century British trade acquired almost a monopoly of the foreign commerce of the Gulf ports. Indian Bunias from Shikarpur and other parts of Seind have settled in considerable numbers at Lingah, Bunder Abbas, Bushire, and Bahrein. Before the advent of the Belgian Customs officials at the former ports, and to this day at Bahrein, they have farmed the Customs. Foreign imports and exports for the most part are conveyed to and from the Gulf in British ships, more than one Anglo-Indian Company (the "British India," the "Bombay and Persia," and the "Anglo-Arabian and Persian Gulf") having maintained for years a merchant-steamer service between Karachi and Bussorah, touching at the Gulf ports on the way, whilst the rival ventures that have occasionally been attempted by foreign nations have uniformly failed and been withdrawn, with the recent exceptions of the heavily-subsidized vessels of the Hamburg-American line, and of the Russian Steam-ship Company, which maintains quarterly sailings from Odessa. Before the institution of the German service the statistics show that 93 per cent. of the numbers and tonnage of the steamers engaged was under the British flag.

* Two works, which would have been invaluable for reference, have not been available in the preparation of this Memorandum, viz.: "The Official Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf," by Mr. Lorimer, and a "Trade Report on Mesopotamia," by Mr. Lloyd.

The protection of the pearl fisheries, which are carried on by the Arab tribes under the time-honoured conditions, is an important feature of British policy. This subject is referred to in a subsequent portion of this Memorandum, dealing with matters of commerce.

During the last forty years the maintenance of the submarine cables of the Indo-European Telegraph Company from Fao to Jask, and of the land lines from that place to Karachi, has also devolved upon the Indian Government, and has tended to increase an already preponderant influence over both the waters and the shores of the Gulf.

Latterly there has been a deliberate but necessary consolidation of our influence in certain quarters where trouble threatened or where rivalry was feared. At the north-west extremity of the Gulf the Government of India, under instructions from His Majesty's Government, have entered into engagements, dated 1899 and 1907, with the Sheikh of Koweit, by which he has bound himself and his successors not to receive the Representative of any other Power and not to alienate any portion of his territory to the Government or subjects of any other Power, while, on the other hand, he has granted to His Majesty's Government certain prior rights in regard to the leasing of any portion of the foreshore of his territory. The first of these Agreements was dictated by the increasing encroachment of Turkish authority; the latter was due to a determination on the part of His Majesty's Government to promote the participation of Great Britain in the Bagdad Railway upon favourable terms.

At Bahrein a step was taken in the direction of protecting British interests and those of the local Sheikh by the appointment of a regular Political Agent, whose beneficent influence has already begun to make itself felt, notably in the settlement of judicial disputes. The more effective application of this influence is now under consideration, with a view to meeting the increasing requirements of European intercourse; while the reform of the Customs administration, and the proper control of the resulting revenue, has continued to occupy for some time the attention of the Government of India.

Such, briefly summarized, is the position that has been won by Great Britain, not without the expenditure of many millions of money and the sacrifice of many valuable lives, in the Persian Gulf. In its vindication this country has more than once been called upon to enter into military occupation of ports or islands in the Gulf. The Island of Kharak was occupied by Indian forces from 1838-42, and again in 1856-7. Bushire was held during the latter years, as also were Mohammerah and Ahwaz upon the Karun. The occupation of these places was an illustration of the vigour with which, in past years, our ascendancy has been maintained. Their abandonment was a proof of the reluctance which has invariably been displayed to emphasize or to perpetuate those responsibilities.

The situation of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf has been well described as unique; for although, with the slight exceptions referred to, she has at no time enjoyed, or even asked for, territorial acquisitions in those regions, she has for generations borne burdens there which no other nation has ever undertaken anywhere, except in the capacity of sovereign; she has had duty thrust upon her without dominion; she has kept the peace amongst people who are not her subjects; has patrolled, during upwards of two centuries, waters over which she has enjoyed no formal lordship; has kept, in strange ports, an open door through which the traders of every nation might have as free access to distant markets as her own.

If Great Britain has become, in any sense, the arbiter and guardian of the Gulf, it has not been through a restless ambition urging her on to the control of the waste places of the earth, but in obedience to the calls that have been made upon her in the past to enforce peace between warring tribes, to give a free course to trade, to hold back the arm of the marauder and the oppressor, to stand between the slave-dealer and his victim.

Government of India, *vide supra*.

Government of India, *vide supra*.

Mr. T. J. Bennett's Paper (see list).

Government of India. Secret despatch of September 21, 1899, *verbatim*.

Government of India, *vide supra*, *verbatim*.

Annual Series, No. 3858, July 1907.

PART II.—POLITICAL.

NOTE.—*The Political Resident in the Persian Gulf and Consul-General at Bushire.*

This official *quâ* Political Resident is under the Indian Government; *quâ* Consul-General under the Foreign Office. The cost of his establishment is divided between the British and Indian exchequers.

As a Consular officer, the Political Resident receives His Majesty's commission as Consul-General for the Provinces of Fars, Khuzistan, and Luristan, and the district of Lingah, and for the coasts and islands of the Persian Gulf, being within the dominions of Persia. He resides at Bushire, and receives an office allowance of 120*l.* from Foreign Office funds.

The judicial powers and jurisdiction of the Political Resident are exercised, by virtue of his commission as Consul-General, under the Persian Coast and Islands Order in Council.

The Resident exercises an undefined but considerable influence upon the political affairs, more especially external, of Muscat, the Trucial States, Bahrein, and Koweit, at which places the Representatives of the Indian Government are under him.

(a.) *Muscat, including the Musandim Peninsula.*

At Muscat there is a Political Agent appointed by the Government of India, who also holds a commission as Consul, under the Foreign Office. The cost of the establishment is borne by Indian revenues.

Neither the coast-line nor the hinterland of the dominions of the Sultan of Muscat has ever been delimited or accurately ascertained.

In the British Counter-Case, presented to The Hague Tribunal in the Muscat Dhows Arbitration in 1905, it is stated that the southern limit on the coast-line of Arabia reached by the Sultan's dominions is near Ras Sair or Sajir. At Rakhout (17° 15' south by 53° 25' east), a place near this point, the Sultan's Vali has built a fort.

From Rakhout up to the town of Muscat, the coast-line is continuously and admittedly under the sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat. North and west of the town of Muscat the coast-line is under the undoubted dominion of the Sultan as far as Khor Kalba. The Sheikh of Shargah claims authority over the coast-line north of this point as far as Ras Dibba, as being part of the territories of the Jowasmi tribe. For many years this district—which is known as the Batineh coast—has been regarded as feudatory of the Sheikh of Shargah, and the coast itself as subject to the Maritime Truce which will be mentioned hereafter. This territory has never been under the sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat, and it is admitted in the French Case in the Muscat Dhows Arbitration that it is under the government of the Sheikh of the Jowasmi, residing at Ras-el-Kheimah.

The following passage which constitutes an important admission on the part of His Majesty's Government, is a *verbatim* extract from the British Counter-Case above referred to:—

"From Ras Dibba to Tibba (Tibat) the coast forming the promontory of Musandim is claimed by the Sultan of Muscat, who has certainly before and since 1864 exercised authority on that coast by his Vali and in other ways; and his rights on the coast are recognized by the Sheikh of Shargah and the Jowasmi."

A detailed account of the territory in question, which comprises Elphinstone Inlet and the Maklab Isthmus, is contained in a letter from the Political Agent at Muscat, dated the 2nd July, 1902. A Minute by Lord Curzon, dated the 6th October, 1902, also deals with the question. Major Cox expressed the view that the Sultan's jurisdiction was of so uncertain and ineffective a character that it would be open to His Majesty's Government either to recognize or to ignore its existence, as might be found most convenient; but Mr. Lorimer, who made investigations on the spot, controverted this view. The passage quoted finally disposes of all future ambiguity as to territorial jurisdiction.

The predecessors of the present Sultan occupied territory for a good many years on the Persian coast from Bunder Abbas to Lingah with the Island of Kishm, under a Firman of the Shah of Persia, to whom they paid rent or tribute. In 1855 a lease for twenty years was granted at an annual rent. In 1868 a new arrangement was made for seven years, also at a rent, but, on the occasion of civil war in Muscat in 1868, the Shah cancelled the lease, under powers given by the Convention, and resumed occupation of the territory in question.

Mr. Lorimer, March 25, 1905.

Government of India Secret despatch of March 2, 1899 (extract).

Gwador is an enclave on the confines of Persia and Beluchistan, which has for over 100 years formed part of the dominions of the Sultan of Muscat, to whom it was granted by the Khan of Khelat. It extends for a radius of one stage (about 10 or 15 miles from the town of Gwador). In this territory is a station of the Indo-European telegraph, but it has never been occupied by Great Britain.

Mr. Murray, No. 12, January 16, 1856.

Mr. Alison, No. 49,

April 7;

No. 103,

July 29;

No. 106,

August 4,

1868.

Mr. Thom-

son, No. 55,

September

8; No. 70,

October 19;

No. 89.

November

26, 1869.

Government of

India Secret

despatch,

vide supra.

The British connection with Muscat is of long standing. Treaties of Friendship and Commerce, as well as for the suppression of slavery, have been concluded with successive Imams of Muscat on different occasions since 1798. In that year the first engagement was entered into between the East India Company and Saiyid Sultan for the exclusion from his territories of French influence, which contemplated finding in Muscat a convenient basis of attack upon India in the war then being waged between Great Britain and France. At a later date, on the death of Saiyid Saïd in 1856, a dispute arose between his two sons as to the possession of Muscat and Zanzibar, which had hitherto been united under the same Ruler. This was referred to the arbitration of the Viceroy of India, then Lord Canning, who, after careful inquiry, decided that the two States should remain separate, being divided between the two brothers, but that Zanzibar, in virtue of its superior wealth, should pay to Muscat a yearly subsidy of 40,000 crowns (5,760*l.*). At a subsequent period, in 1873, the British Government, in return for Agreements concerning the suppression of the Slave Trade, successfully concluded with the Rulers both of Muscat and Zanzibar, undertook to relieve the latter of this payment, which has since that date been made by the Government of India almost without intermission* to the reigning Sultan of Muscat. The Sultan was to receive this subsidy "so long as he continued faithfully to fulfil his Treaty engagements, and manifest his friendship towards the British Government." It appears, indeed, that since the time of Saiyid Saïd no Sultan of Muscat has been able effectively to establish his position without obtaining the recognition of the British Government. Throughout this period the Government of India have on several occasions been called upon to intervene in the dynastic disputes of the Muscat State. Claimants or pretenders have been interned in India, have been prevented from attacking a reigning Sultan, have been given allowances, and have been otherwise treated with marks of wise and beneficent interest. Thus, in 1874, in 1877, 1883, 1886, 1888, 1890, and again in 1895 and 1896, His Majesty's Government afforded the Sultan valuable and effective support in the maintenance of stable government.

This catalogue of services rendered by the British Government to successive Rulers of Muscat, and notably to the present occupant of the throne, the annual payment of a subsidy contingent upon the loyal fulfilment of Treaty obligations, and the history of the influence thereby exercised by Great Britain for a period of over half a century upon the fortunes of the State, at once explain and justify the existence of a positive political predominance on the part of Great Britain, that is shared by no other Power in the affairs of Muscat. While not compromising the independence of its Sovereign, which both the British and French Governments have reciprocally bound themselves, by a declaration made in the year 1862, to respect, this condition of affairs has yet been the inevitable outcome of the physical situation of the country, of its contiguity to the shores of India, and of its close proximity to the waters of the Persian Gulf, in which British interests, political and commercial, have exercised so commanding an influence.

In the ports and territory of Muscat itself this predominance has been accentuated by the facts that the trade of the British dominions with Muscat amounts to about

* (1.) There was an intermission in 1888-90, consequent on the death of Sultan Seyyid Turki, and pending the complete recognition of his successor.

(2.) There was a very short intermission from December 1898 to September 1899, pending the settlement of unpaid balances of indemnity (arising out of losses to British subjects during Abdullah-bin-Saleh's rebellion) and of two loans. (British Counter-Case, Section VIII.)

five-sixths of the entire trade of the country; that the latter is almost exclusively in the hands of Indian traders, who are British subjects; that the commerce and interests of any other country are relatively insignificant; that the share of the trade enjoyed by the three other Powers with whom Muscat has direct Treaty relations, viz., America, France, and Holland,* amounts, if added together, to less than one-seventeenth of the entire trade of the country.

The relations of amity which have been above recorded culminated in 1891 in an Agreement voluntarily entered into by Seyyid Feysal-bin-Turki, G.C.I.E., the present Sultan, following immediately upon the conclusion of a new Commercial Treaty between Great Britain and Muscat, by which he undertook never to cede, to sell, to mortgage, or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government, the dominions of Muscat and Oman or any of their dependencies.

In 1894 a French Vice-Consul was appointed at Muscat, and this official made it his first aim to alienate the sympathy of the Sultan from Great Britain. The action of France was believed to be inspired to a large extent by Russia, who was credited with designs of an aggressive naval policy in the Gulf. It would be tedious to retail the circumstances under which this action was exerted. Suffice it to say that matters reached a crisis in 1899, when it transpired that an Agreement had been concluded with the French Government, in March of the preceding year, for the lease of a coaling station at Bunder Gisseh, a place 5 miles south-east of Muscat.

This action was held to constitute a violation of the Agreement of 1891 with Great Britain.

Owing to this and the breach of other Treaty stipulations, and of personal assurances formally entered into by the Sultan, a Memorandum was presented to him on the 3rd February, 1899, by the Government of India, which, after recapitulating the engagements of the Sultans of Muscat to Her Majesty's Government, and the acts of friendliness and of material support afforded to them, particularly in checking the attacks of hostile tribes on Muscat, made the following demands upon the Sultan:—

(a.) The abrogation of a cession of a piece of territory for a coaling station to France (to which he had agreed without the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government).

(b.) The dismissal of a confidential adviser, Abdul Aziz, who was notoriously inimical to British interests.

(c.) Payment of interest on certain sums due as an indemnity to British subjects.

(d.) Cessation of the levy of taxes on British subjects which were not compatible with his Treaty engagements.

(e.) The issue of orders to his subjects for the exclusive use of the Muscat flag.

Under threat of force the Sultan formally complied with these terms, and wrote to the French Consul declining to receive Abdul Aziz (who was the Consul's Munshi) as French Agent.

About this time the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown was sought as to certain aspects of the Anglo-French Declaration of 1862, engaging Great Britain and France to respect the independence of the Sultan of Muscat.

They expressed themselves as follows:—

"1. The Declaration of 1862 does not in our opinion require the British Government to abstain from exercising a preponderating influence in Muscat, so long as that influence is not exerted in any way inconsistent with the independence of Muscat. For instance, the subsidy, and the terms on which it was made payable, involved no breach of the Declaration.

"2. We think that the British Government would be justified in punishing or even deposing a particular Sultan who broke his engagements with the British Government. The undertaking contained in the Declaration is an engagement to respect the independence of the Sovereigns of Muscat as representing the country, and does not carry with it an inability to punish any particular Sovereign for breaches of Treaty or of international law. For this the consent of France is not necessary. But it would be a breach of the Declaration if after deposing a particular Sultan a successor were set up who was not independent.

"We should add that, whilst the question whether the Sultan could consistently with the

* The dates of the respective Treaties are: United States of America, 1833; France, 1844; Netherlands, 1877.

An Arrangement respecting trade jurisdiction, wrecks, &c., was concluded by the Portuguese Governor-General of Mozambique in February 1826.

Declaration be required to dismiss a particular adviser must depend on the special circumstances of the case, it is hardly compatible with the independence of Muscat that the Sultan should be compelled to accept Ministers and advisers who are acceptable to the British Government.

"(Signed) RICHARD E. WEBSTER.
ROBERT B. FINLAY.

"Law Officers' Department, March 8, 1899."

With regard to the French coaling station at Bunder Gisseh, Her Majesty's Government expressed both to His Highness the Sultan and to France the view that the sale or lease of any part of His Highness' dominions to a foreign Power was not only a breach of the Sultan's Agreement with Great Britain of 1891, but was also inconsistent with the Declaration concluded between the British and French Governments in 1862. The Government of the French Republic accepted the British reading of the latter instrument, viz., that neither State might accept any cession or lease of Muscat territory; and it was agreed that France should be free to establish a coal depôt on the same terms as those granted to Great Britain, viz., on sufferance, and such a depôt has been established in Muscat Harbour on a portion of the ground originally allotted to Great Britain for the purpose. The result, therefore, of British action was to prevent a lease or cession of territory to France in contravention of the Declaration of 1862, which would otherwise have taken place. In other words, the British protest, so far from being a breach of that Declaration as argued by the French Government, prevented its breach by France.

Vide British
Counter-
Case, Mus-
cat Dhows
Arbitration.

Grant of French flags to Muscat Dhows.

France has always refused to permit the exercise by the war-ships of any other Power of the *droit de visite* on the high seas as regards ships carrying the French flag, and, by only partially ratifying the Brussels General Act in 1892, she preserved this claim to resist the right of search.

The French officials in Obokh, Madagascar, and the Comoros have granted, from time to time, French ships' papers and flags to subjects of the Sultan of Muscat, and the same course has been taken by the French Consuls at Aden, Muscat, and Zanzibar. Most of the Omanis who thus received French papers belonged to the district of Jalani and the town of Sur, within Muscat territories. These men were neither of French nationality nor naturalization; they had no authority from the Sultan to change their allegiance, and they had no permanent residence or settlement in French territory, but merely paid fleeting visits thereto for the purpose of renewing their licences.

Many of these flagholders engaged in the Slave Trade. Moreover, on returning to the waters and territory of Muscat, they claimed that the Sultan was not entitled to board or search their vessels, or to exercise any jurisdiction over them, and that they were entitled to be treated as French protégés, and to be exempt from his laws as regards customs, quarantine, and other matters.

The Sultan of Muscat never admitted that the grant of French flags or papers was warranted by Treaty or usage, and made repeated protests on the subject. He appealed to His Majesty's Government, who on several occasions made representations to the French Government.

Finally, it was decided that the whole question of the grant of French flags to subjects of the Sultan should be submitted to the arbitration of the International Court at The Hague.

The following two points were submitted to the decision of the Tribunal, which met at The Hague on the 24th July, 1905:—

(a.) The scope of the reciprocal Declaration made by Great Britain and France in 1862 in relation to the issue by France to subjects of the Sultan of papers authorizing them to fly the French flag; and

(b.) The nature of the privileges and immunities claimed by subjects of the Sultan who were owners or masters of dhows and possessed French papers, or were members of the crew of such dhows, and their families, especially as to the manner in which such privileges and immunities affected the jurisdiction of His Highness over his said subjects.

The results of the Award may be summarized as follows:—

France may renew the licences to fly the French flag granted to owners of dhows before the 2nd January, 1892. But no licences given since that date are valid unless the grantee was a *bonâ fide* French protégé before 1863.* This decision will, it is believed, reduce the number of French flagholders to ten, or twelve at the utmost. Moreover, the licences in question cannot be transmitted or transferred to any other dhow, even if belonging to the same owner. Thus it would appear that if one of the licensed dhows were to be lost or disabled, the owner, in order to obtain a new licence, must prove that he comes under the category of those who were *bonâ fide* French protégés before 1863. Such protégés must now be scarce, and the number of French flagholders should, in the course of a few years, be reduced to vanishing point.

Muscat Customs.

Administration Report on the Persian Gulf Political Residency and Muscat Political Agency for 1903-1904.

Letter from Political Agent, Muscat, to Resident in Persian Gulf, No. 352, dated September 11, 1901.

India Office, February 14, 1905.

The administration of the Muscat Customs is under the direct management of the local Government. In the last few years the Sultan has shown a ready inclination to profit by Western ideas, and there is every reason to hope that enlightened progress will ultimately be made in the matter of the Customs. At present the system by which sudden calls on the State Exchequer are met by drafts upon the Customs Superintendent is liable to place that official in frequent difficulties, and to prevent him from doing full justice to his charge.

The Sur Customs should be an important factor in the Sultan's revenue, but the French flag question made it impossible for some time for the Ruler of Muscat to bring the administration of Sur to that state of reasonable efficiency which its importance as a trade emporium demands.

The Gwadar Customs, too, are a source of annoyance to the Sultan. Ever since the late Khoja contractor was ousted from the Customs farm, and the collection of customs dues resumed by the Sultan, constant dissensions have occurred between the mercantile community and Customs officials regarding the tariff.†

For many years the Indian Government have been desirous of placing the Muscat Customs under the superintendence of a British official. In 1905 they suggested that an arrangement should be proposed to the Sultan of Muscat for the appointment of a British head Customs officer. This official was to be nominated by the Indian Government and appointed by the Sultan. But, although a servant of the Sultan, it was to be stipulated that, in cases of important differences of opinion between him and His Highness, the latter should agree to accept the friendly arbitration of the British Political Agent.

Another feature of the proposal was a guarantee by India of the Muscat Customs revenue to the extent of 20,000 dollars a month.

Circumstances were apparently favourable for such an arrangement, as the Sultan had become dissatisfied with his own administration of the Customs. Owing to disputes he was unable to obtain from that source sufficient funds even to send a steamer to Zanzibar. It appeared, however, to Lord Lansdowne that any considerable change in the internal administration of Muscat would afford the French Government grounds of complaint or a pretext for a counter-move. He considered that an arrangement might be made of a less far-reaching character than that proposed by the Government of India; and, in any case, he thought that the matter should be deferred until the conclusion of the Muscat arbitration.

Later in the year the Sultan applied to the Indian Government for a loan, and it was suggested that compliance with this request might afford a reason for bringing up the question of a reorganization of the Customs. Negotiations were, however, then in progress for carrying into effect the Muscat Arbitration Award, and Lord Lansdowne considered that, pending their conclusion, it was inadvisable to deal with the loan on the proposed basis. He limited his approval to the grant of a small

To India Office, March 23, 1905.

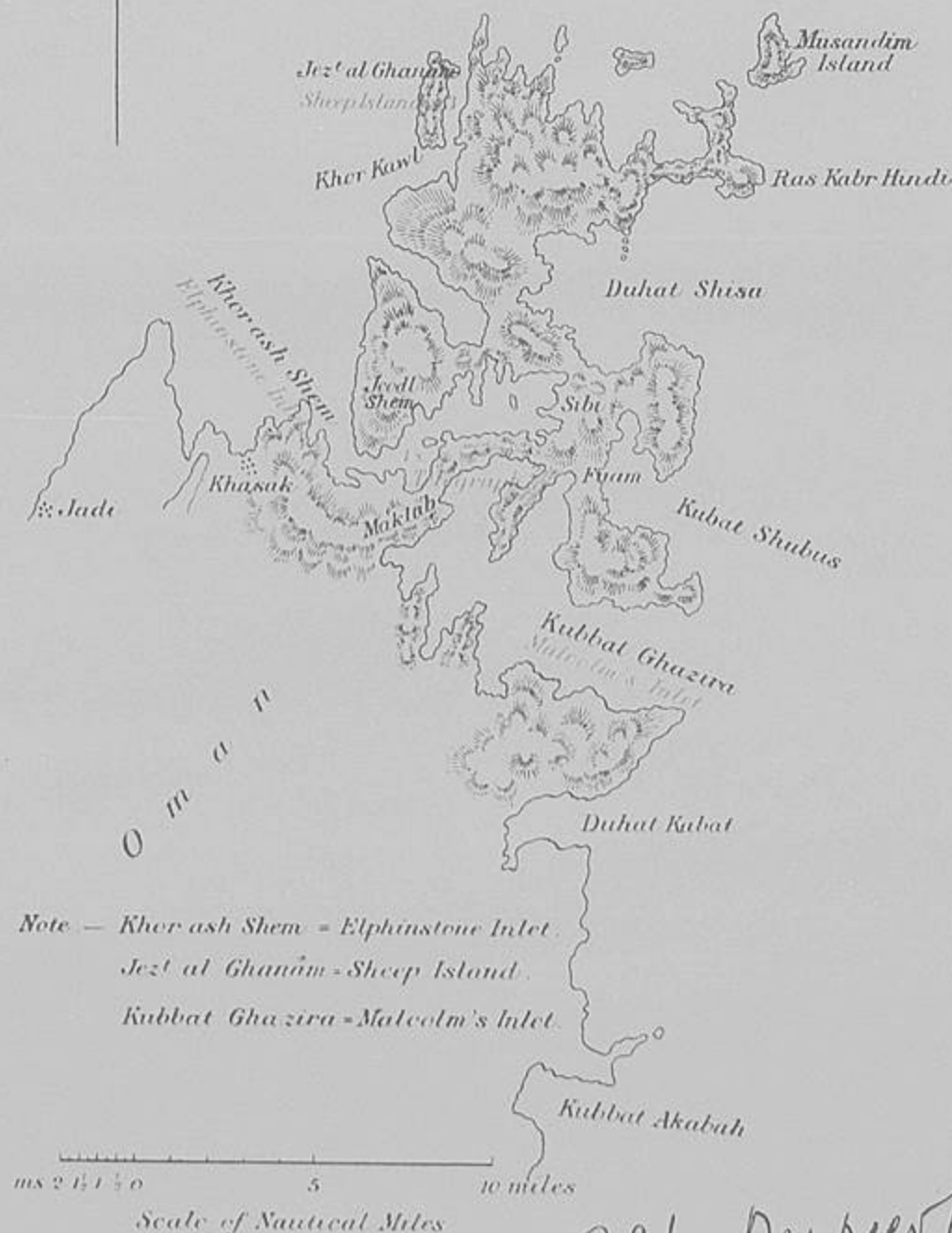
India Office, November 28, 1905.
To India Office, December 6, 1905.
To India Office, March 29, 1906.
[10128].

* The year 1863 was taken as the date at which, in virtue of legislation by the Ottoman Porte, and of the Franco-Moroccan Treaty of that year, the creation of new protégés was regulated and limited.

† The Sultan visited Gwadar in person in February 1904 for the purpose of bringing about a settlement, in which he appears to have been unsuccessful. For a description of the tariff, see Administration Report for 1903-4.

*Sketch to illustrate positions of
Flagstaffs at Elphinstone Inlet
and Sheep Island.
(Musandim Peninsula.)*

D 62



W. S. K. R. P. S.

*Asst. Resdt. and H.B.M.'s Consul
Bandarabbas.*

advance, in relief of the Sultan's pressing financial difficulties, repayable from his subsidy, without political conditions.*

Although the Sultan had promised to borrow only from His Majesty's Government, advances were obtained by him from M. Goguyer (a French merchant), the Khojas (Muscat subjects), and various firms, against future payments of customs dues. In August 1907 the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf reported that a further sum had been borrowed from M. Goguyer against the security of these dues. It seemed to him a good opportunity for official remonstrance, unless it might be considered better to wait until the termination of the French Flag case.

The control of the Arms Traffic may not improbably evoke a wish in some quarters to internationalize the Muscat Customs Administration. It is perhaps therefore not unfortunate that in view of the state of the Sultan's financial affairs, and the recent conclusion of the Muscat Arbitration Award negotiations, occasion may soon occur for reviving the proposal to reorganize this Department under British auspices.

The Musandim Peninsula.

The following description of the Musandim Peninsula is taken from Lord Curzon's book on Persia:—

"Fifteen miles from the extreme point of Ras Musandim the promontory again narrows to an isthmus, named Maklab, not more than half a mile in width, by which it is united to the mainland. On the eastern side of this isthmus a splendid bay, called by the natives Ghubbeh Ghazireh, and by the English Malcolm's Inlet, sweeps in from the sea. On the western side is an even finer natural harbour, more completely landlocked, and providing anchorage for the largest vessels, known as Elphinstone's Inlet. The station of Khasab, at the entrance to this wonderful cove, has before now been recommended (amongst others by Sir Lewis Pelly) for permanent occupation by the British, as a naval base in the Persian Gulf. Here the entire British fleet might safely ride at anchor.

"When the telegraph cable was first being laid to the Persian Gulf in 1864, it was taken by what was then thought the shortest and best line from Gwadar to Cape Musandim. Entering Malcolm's Inlet, the wires were stretched across the Isthmus of Maklab, and re-entered the sea in Elphinstone's Inlet on the other side. But the drawbacks of the site, arising from the hot climate, the sterile neighbourhood, and the suspicions of the native tribes, compelled a retreat from the course adopted; and, in 1869, the cable was diverted to Cape Jask and Henjam."

In a despatch dated the 2nd May, 1901, the Government of India wrote:—

"The harbour of Elphinstone Inlet on the western side of the Musandim Promontory possesses many advantages, but we consider it less suitable (than Bassidu and Henjam) for our ultimate naval station at the mouth of the Gulf, because of its total lack of supplies and the uncivilized character of the aboriginal inhabitants. We should, however, see no objection to the hoisting of the British flag on the Isthmus of Maklab, not necessarily with the view of ulterior occupation, but in order to anticipate seizure by any other Power."

The question of the measures to be taken to prevent the occupation of the anchorages of this promontory by some other European Power was again raised by the India Office at an inter-Departmental discussion on various questions connected with the Persian Gulf on the 14th July, 1902. The Government of India, to whom the Report of the Committee was communicated, recommended in a despatch dated the 23rd October, 1902, that the British Resident in the Persian Gulf should be authorized to effect a reoccupation of the deserted telegraph buildings at Elphinstone

* The following loans have been made to the Sultan of Muscat from Indian revenues:—

- 1902. 1,50,000 rupees (10,000L.), advanced to Sultan for purchase of yacht.
- 1904. 30,000 rupees (2,000L.), on condition he was not to borrow elsewhere.
- 1906. 20,000 rupees (1,333L.), sanctioned, but apparently not taken advantage of, by His Highness.

These sums are being repaid by deductions from the Sultan's subsidy. In September 1906 (the latest information received) the balance due from the Sultan to the Government of India on account of the above was stated to be 49,791 rupees (viz., 31,791 rupees on account of the advance for the yacht; 18,000 rupees balance due on the other two loans).

Inclosure 3
in India
Office,
March 21,
1906
[10128].
India Office,
October 10,
1907
[33757].

Inlet by hoisting the British flag and posting a Native Agent there. The Admiralty, who were consulted by the Foreign Office, stated on the 31st January, 1903, that the Lords Commissioners saw no objection to the proposal.

On the 21st January, 1904, the Government of India embodied in a further despatch the conclusions arrived at by the Viceroy and the Naval Commander-in-chief on the East India Station, after Lord Curzon's tour in the Persian Gulf, as to the selection of naval positions.

Amongst other recommendations it was proposed that, in order to prevent any foreign flag being planted in the harbours of the Musandim Peninsula, Elphinstone Inlet should be reoccupied. It was suggested that the best way of effecting this reoccupation would be to erect a flagstaff on the isthmus which commands Elphinstone and Malcolm Inlets and on Telegraph Island, in the former inlet. It was also proposed, on the advice of the Admiral, that a flagstaff should be planted on Sheep Island, in the anchorage of Khor Kawi, on the western side of the peninsula, which is not only very commodious, but which might, it was suggested, some day be useful as a coaling station.

In a Report dated December 1903 Rear Admiral Atkinson-Willes had furnished details of Khor Kawi:—

"The Khor appears capable of sheltering several large cruisers besides a number of small craft. Its strategical position is excellent, and, in conjunction with the Islands of Kishm, Henjam, Larak, and Hormuz, it will form a strong position for the control of the entrance to the Gulf."

On the 26th November, 1904, the Viceroy reported that the flagstaffs had been erected.

On learning that the flagstaffs had been erected on the sites in question, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty demurred to the action which had been taken. They formulated their objections in the following terms:—

"My Lords cannot admit that the fact of their having offered no objection to the proposal to reoccupy Telegraph Island by placing there a Native Agent in charge of a British flag can be held to cover their unsolicited acquiescence in the proposed further distribution of flagstaffs in the district, one being on the mainland.

"The original proposal was simply a case of reverting to a state of things which had previously existed without question, to the renewal of which there was a reasonable answer in the event of objections being raised by European Powers, and in which there could be no question of territorial expansion, as the so-called island is nothing but a rock. As regards the other flagstaffs, it is a very different matter, and my Lords felt that if the flag was not intended to denote British territorial expansion, it not only meant nothing, but was a possible source of international complication."

In view of this expression of opinion the question was submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defence, and their decision was conveyed to the Government of India in a despatch dated the 19th May, 1905. It was to the effect that the hoisting of flags was open to the objection that it would not confer upon this country any special rights in the places selected, unless it were accompanied by a specific proclamation of protectorate or annexation. On the other hand, an open assertion of British claims to these places might excite the jealousy of other Powers, and give rise to political complications. His Majesty's Government preferred to adhere to the alternative method of making it clear that they would not tolerate the occupation by any foreign Power of any port or territory in the Persian Gulf, and, in this connection, attention was directed to Lord Lansdowne's declaration, made in the House of Lords on the 5th May, 1903, that "we should regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very great menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal." In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government had arrived at the conclusion that the flagstaffs on Sheep Island and the Maklab Isthmus should be abandoned, while, in view of the result of Mr. Lorimer's recent inquiries, which tended to confirm the claim of the Sultan of Muscat to sovereignty over the territory in question, the Government of India were requested to furnish their views as to the maintenance of the flagstaff on Telegraph Island, which had been the site of the original cable station.

The Government of India replied in their despatch of the 26th September, 1907, that the flagstaff might conceivably be useful in certain circumstances, having regard to the German desire for an increase of influence in the Gulf, and for a telegraph line to the east; and as neither the Sultan of Muscat nor any foreign Power had ever taken exception to its existence, it seemed very improbable that any international

complications would arise from its maintenance in the future. The Government of India had already given it as their opinion that the erection of the flagstaff could not be regarded as contravening, in any way, the provisions of the Treaty of 1862, which binds both England and France not to trench on the independence of the Sultan of Muscat; and, in these circumstances, they recommended that no action should be taken beyond merely leaving the flagstaff on Telegraph Island where it was. No decision has yet been arrived at on this recommendation. The flagstaffs on Sheep Island and Maklab Isthmus were actually removed in October 1905.

In October 1907 an Inter-Departmental Committee, consisting of three delegates from the Admiralty and representatives of the Foreign Office and India Office, was convened to report on the feasibility of the Germans securing an outlet for the Bagdad Railway on the Persian Gulf independently of British co-operation. The Committee formed the opinion that such a consummation was feasible, and they concluded their Report in the following terms:—

"We do not, however, feel confident that we possess the means absolutely to debar Germany from acquiring an outlet on the Gulf; and this outlet, though at first commercial, might eventually be transformed into a strategic base, but by steps so gradual and clandestine as to render protests difficult or impracticable. In these circumstances we cannot but express the opinion that it is in the highest degree desirable to come to terms with the promoters of the Railway.

"Finally, we would advocate that all steps which His Majesty's Government may consider feasible should be taken to consolidate the advantages we already possess at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, notably at Musandim Peninsula (where the harbour accommodation and water supply are adequate) and at the Islands of Kishm and Henjam."

The Admiralty stated, in a letter dated the 9th November, 1907, that "their Lordships concur in the Report of the Committee, and they consider that, from a naval standpoint, it is most desirable that effect should be given at once to the Committee's particular recommendations relating to the steps to be taken by His Majesty's Government in the establishment of a definite position . . . at the entrance to the Persian Gulf."

The Government of India suggested in their despatch of the 21st January, 1904, that it might be found desirable to erect a lighthouse on Musandim Peninsula.

Further correspondence on the subject took place in the course of the year, and was forwarded to the Foreign Office in the India Office letter of the 29th September, 1904. It appeared that the Government of India were of opinion that the light might be placed either on the rocky point of Cape Musandim or on one of the islands called the Quoins that are situated at a little distance from it; they considered that there were political advantages in placing the light upon a point of the peninsula, and they were accordingly disposed to prefer this locality. The British India Steam Navigation Company, who were consulted on the subject, expressed the view that a lighthouse at the extremity of the Musandim Peninsula would be of considerable help to shipping. They recommended that it should be constructed on Cape Musandim rather than on one of the Quoins Islands, provided that the land south of the point would not render the light invisible to ships proceeding up the Gulf.

On the 21st September, 1904, the Viceroy telegraphed to inquire whether it would be possible to secure the services of an expert through Trinity House to examine the scheme and also to report on the general question of the lighting of the Persian Gulf. This telegram was referred to the Foreign Office for Lord Lansdowne's observations, but action appears to have been suspended upon it until the question of the flagstaffs at Musandim had been settled, and, as the ultimate decision in regard to the latter was that they should be removed, the lighthouse question appears to have been allowed to drop.

The erection of a lighthouse might be of considerable service, both nautical and political, at Musandim. With regard to the erection of lights and the improvement of harbours in general, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf has expressed the view that, apart from their utilitarian aspect, they would undoubtedly do much to strengthen our already predominant position. The subject will be reverted to in Part III of this Memorandum (see p. 50).

If a lighthouse is built at Musandim a wireless telegraphy station might likewise be established. This would be of much advantage to passing vessels for purposes of signalling, and it is worthy of consideration whether similar stations should not be established at Bassidu, Bahrein, and on Kubbar Island near Koweit, and wireless installations supplied to His Majesty's ships in the Persian Gulf, with a view to the easier and more effective suppression of piracy.

(b.) *The Trucial Chiefs.**

The British Government maintain no Political Officer in "Trucial" territory, but a Native Agent in the employ of the Bushire Residency is stationed at Shargah, and moves from place to place as is required.

The so-called "Trucial Chiefs," who rule over the Jowasmi, Al bu Ali and Beni Yas tribes, are six in number, and they respectively reside at Ras-el-Kheimah, Amulgavine, Ajman, Shargah, Dabai, and Abu Dthabi. All these places are situated on the Pirate Coast, which is part of the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf, and extends from a point between Tibba and Shuam to El Odeid. The Sheikh of Shargah also claims authority over the coast-line on the Gulf of Oman from Khor Kalba as far as Ras Dibba, on the ground that it is part of the territories of the Joasim tribe.

Aitchison's
Trea.
Vol. X.

These Chiefs are called the "Trucial Chiefs" on account of the Treaties of Maritime Truce concluded with them between 1835 and 1853, by which their internecine strife upon the sea was stopped.

They are all now independent, and since the isolation of the Wahabees in the highlands, they have been exempted from the tribute or blackmail for the payment of which they were formerly directly or indirectly liable to the Wahabee Chief of Nejd.

In the beginning of last century an expedition was sent to the Persian Gulf to punish the Jowasmi for certain aggressions on British ships, and to co-operate with the Imam of Muscat who was then at war with them. The expedition resulted in the conclusion of a Treaty in February 1806, binding them to respect the flag and property of the British, and to assist vessels touching on their coast. This Treaty appears to have been concluded without reference to the Wahabees.

The spread of the Wahabees in Oman soon threatened the Ruler of Muscat with destruction, and the British Government determined to support him, and to destroy the piratical fleets as the only means of preserving the peace of the Gulf. A strong force was dispatched in 1809, which took Ras-el-Kheimah and other places and destroyed the boats of the pirates.

Notwithstanding these measures, piracy increased to an intolerable extent, and an expedition was therefore dispatched to the Persian Gulf, under Sir W. Grant Keir, in 1819 for the purpose of completely crushing them.

In 1820 the first general Treaty was signed between the British Government and the Chiefs, and of these or similar Agreements there have been in all no fewer than eight. In 1839 the Maritime Truce was concluded, and was renewed from time to time until the year 1853, when it was succeeded by the Treaty of Perpetual Peace which has lasted ever since. Under that Treaty it was provided that there should be a complete cessation of hostilities at sea between the subjects of the signatory Chiefs, and a "perfect maritime truce for evermore;" that, in the event of aggressions by any one by sea, the injured parties should not retaliate, but should refer the matter to the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, and that the British Government should watch over the peace of the Gulf and insure at all times the observance of the Treaty.

In 1892 a further Treaty was concluded separately with each of the Trucial Chiefs by which they agreed (1) not to enter into any Agreement or correspondence with any Power other than the British Government; (2) not to consent to the residence in their territories of the Agent of any other Government without the assent of the British Government; (3) not to cede, sell, mortgage, or otherwise give for occupation any part of their territory save to the British Government.

Vide
Colonel
Pelly's
Report of
April 1863.

So long ago as 1823 Captain McLeod, reporting on the Jowasmi tribe (being then at Ras-el-Khaimah and Shargah), described them as "possessing no articles of export, since their pearls are generally purchased by merchants on the spot, and the produce of their country is not even sufficient for their maintenance. Their only employment is fishing, diving for pearls, and importing dates, grain, and other necessities of life which they purchase with the price of those pearls. They are very poor, and perhaps can never find much employment in commerce unless in carrying for others, although it is said they at one time possessed a very extensive trade."

* A report on this subject by Colonel Kemball will be found in "Persia and Arabia," Part 12, p. 343 (March 1903).

Colonel (now General Sir Arnold) Kemball writing in 1845 remarked:—

"Upon the success of the pearl-fishing and the profits of the carrying trade which it brings into operation must depend the means of obtaining the positive necessities of life and those trifling luxuries desirable to an Arab. It is needless to observe how materially their own condition, and, by an easily deduced corollary, the safety of the Gulf, might be affected by the failure of a single season. Hence the anxiety and care attended with great expense which has been devoted by our Government to the maintenance of perfect tranquillity and security on the pearl banks."

In his report dated April 1863 on the tribes of the Persian Gulf, Colonel Pelly, who was for many years British Resident, wrote as follows:—

"The settlements of these tribes are mainly dependent for subsistence upon the proceeds of their pearl-divings; they possess little territory. As to the pearl banks, these are held in common by the tribes, and thousands of boats collect there during the diving season to keep the peace. . . . Men must export what they can produce or spare, or else they must go without imports; if men situate like these Arabs do not export salt-fish and pearls, they must either turn pirates or starve."

In a Durbar, held at Shargah in November 1903, the Viceroy addressed the Chiefs as follows:—

"Chiefs,—Out of the relations that were thus created, and which, by your own consent, constituted the British Government the guardian of intertribal peace, there grew up political ties between the Government of India and yourselves, whereby the British Government became your overlords and protectors, and you have relations with no other Power. Every one of the States known as the Trucial States has bound itself, as you know, not to enter into any Agreement or correspondence with any other Power, not to admit the Agent of any other Government, and not to part with any portion of its territories. These engagements are binding on every one of you, and you have faithfully adhered to them. They are also binding in their reciprocal effect upon the British Government, and as long as they are faithfully observed by the Chiefs there is no fear that any one will be allowed to tamper with your rights or liberties.

"Sometimes I think that the record of the past is in danger of being forgotten, and there are persons who ask, why should Great Britain continue to exercise these powers? The history of your States and of your families, and the present condition of the Gulf, are the answer. We were here before any other Power in modern times had shown its face in these waters. We found strife, and we have created order. It was our commerce as well as your security that was threatened and called for protection. At every port along these coasts the subjects of the King of England still reside and trade. The great Empire of India, which it is our duty to defend, lies almost at your gates. We saved you from extinction at the hands of your neighbours. We opened these seas to the ships of all nations, and enabled their flags to fly in peace. We have not seized or held your territory. We have not destroyed your independence, but have preserved it. We are not now going to throw away this century of costly and triumphant enterprise; we shall not wipe out the most unselfish page in history. The peace of these waters must still be maintained; your independence will continue to be upheld; and the influence of the British Government must remain supreme."

(c.) *Bahrein.*

From the eleventh century to the beginning of the sixteenth century the inhabitants of Bahrein, to whom a Persian and Arab descent has been variously assigned, appear to have been subject to Chiefs of their own race, though in the time of Alphonso de Albuquerque the island fell into the possession of the Portuguese, who were eventually deprived of it by a dependent Sheikh of Nejd. During part of the seventeenth century, and for twenty-five years in the latter half of the eighteenth, Bahrein paid tribute to the Shah of Persia. With the death of Karim Khan in 1779 the influence of Persia began to wane, and the petty Chiefs of the Gulf, whose lawlessness had been controlled by the strong hand of Nadir Shah and his immediate successors, were soon involved in contests for superiority.

[1563]

Address of
the Viceroy
at public
Durbar held
at Shargah,
November
21, 1903.

Government of
India's
despatch of
February
22, 1870
(Abstract)
and Bombay
Records,
vol. xxiv.

A section of the Arab tribe of Uttoobees, which had already been settled at Zobara for some years, and had increased so rapidly in wealth and power as to be virtually independent, took advantage of the disturbed state of affairs to attack Bahrein in 1782. In the following year they accomplished the subjugation of the island, of which, under varying fortunes, they have retained possession ever since.

1782.

Under the resolute rule of Syed Sultan, the influence of Muscat had been steadily increasing, and in 1799, at the instance of the Beglerbeg of Fars, the Imam fitted out an expedition which ended in the reduction of Bahrein and the deportation of members of the leading families to Muscat. Those who escaped were not slow to make overtures to the Wahabees, and in 1801 by their aid recovered the island.

1799.

1801.

1805.

The influence of Syed Sultan proved, indeed, on his death to have been no more than personal; the ascendancy in the Gulf was left with the Wahabees, and the Uttoobees, no less than the other Chiefs of the Littoral, were for some years completely under their control. In 1805, however, they tired of their allegiance, and were also disinclined to share in the piratical schemes which the Wahabees systematically encouraged. Their Sheikhs accordingly inquired from the British Resident in the Gulf whether if they retired from the mainland, and withheld their allegiance from the Wahabees, the British Government would supply them with a vessel or two, so as to enable them to remain undisturbed at Bahrein. The Resident recommended that the request should be granted, but the Bombay Government declined to interfere in the matter.

1815.

In 1815 the Imam of Muscat attacked the island, but was repulsed with great loss.

At this time the Uttoobees had so far departed from their former policy as to encourage pirates to resort to their ports, in order to dispose of their plunder.

1820.

In 1820 General Keir negotiated a Treaty with the brother Chiefs Suliman and Abdulla, who then ruled over the island, stipulating that every possible discouragement should be given to pirates, and admitting them to the benefit of the general Treaty with the friendly Arabs, concluded about the same time.

1822.

In 1822 an Agreement was made by the British Resident at Bushire with the Prince of Shiraz, recognizing Bahrein as a dependency of the Province of Fars. This Agreement was entirely contrary to the views of the Government at Bombay, and letters were written to the Prince of Shiraz disavowing the Treaty in strong terms and announcing the recall of Captain Bruce. Not only did the Indian Government disavow the Treaty, but Mr. G. Willock, British Representative at Tabreez, reported that—

Mr. G. Willock, No. 1, January 25, 1822.

“Mirza Baugur, Anlie, who had been deputed to Court to obtain the ratification of the Treaty, did not meet with a favourable reception; and His Majesty the Shah, whilst refusing his accordance to the stipulations, expressed his displeasure that the Prince of Shiraz should have entered into any engagements with the British Government without his knowledge and injunctions.”

The Treaty was therefore not ratified either by the Shah or by the Government of India. This is an important point, since as late as 1906 the Persian Government based their claim to Bahrein on the Treaty of 1822.

Mr. Grant-Duff, No. 247, September 26, 1906.

1825.

In 1824 the British Government mediated with success between Bahrein and the kindred house of Rahmah-bin-Jaubir of Demaum.

In the following year Suliman died, and was succeeded by his son Khalifa, but the latter's uncle, Abdulla, managed to retain all real power in his own hands. The Imam of Muscat was in favour of active intervention on behalf of Khalifa; the Governor of Bombay warned him of the evils which would flow from such a step, but his advice proved unavailing. As, however, Khalifa was prompt in his opposition to the common enemy, the Imam was utterly routed, and the Uttoobees, elated by success, took the initiative, and protested their unwillingness to agree to any terms of peace which were not guaranteed by the British Government; finally, in 1831, the desultory warfare which had ensued fizzled out from inanition.

1831.

1839.

In 1839, on the irruption of the Egyptian army into Nejd, Sheikh Abdulla won over the Commander, by the promise of an annual tribute, to undertake that he would not encroach on Bahrein. The British Government, who at this time were watching with anxiety the progress of the Egyptian troops, expostulated with the Sheikh on the way in which he was sacrificing his independence; he admitted, in answer, that he would be prepared to drop all further connection with the Egyptian Pasha and “avow himself a dependant of Great Britain,” in return for a guarantee of protection.

The speedy withdrawal of the Egyptian army from Nejd made any further negotiations on this subject unnecessary.

The dissensions amongst the various members of the ruling family of Bahrein had by this time reached such a pitch as to give the greatest cause of anxiety for the safety of the Gulf. Khalifa died in 1834, and was succeeded by his son, Mahomed. Between the latter and his great-uncle, Sheikh Abdulla, there had always been jealousy, and in a short time civil war broke out, and finally led to the discomfiture of Abdulla and his expulsion from the island.

In 1845 the British Government exerted their influence at Bahrein, when they objected to the interference of Persia, and ordered the exiled Sheikh Abdulla to abstain from disturbing the peace of the Gulf.

1845.

In 1847 the ruling Sheikh, Mahomed-bin-Khalifa, offered allegiance to Great Britain, which, however, was refused, though he was assured of the continuance of the good-will and friendship of the British Government.

1847.

In 1848 Abdulla died, but the feud with the Khalifa family was vigorously maintained by his son, Mahomed-bin-Abdulla; and the history of the period which intervened up to the time (1859) that the latter was declared a public enemy and confined by the Government of India in the fort of Assurghur, resembles in every essential the history of preceding days. Piratical outrages were frequent; the Resident's advice was asked only to be disregarded; agreements were broken as soon as made; trade languished; the common people were oppressed; the Wahabees, egged on by a restless ambition, aided and abetted Mahomed-bin-Abdulla; and, finally, when a descent on Bahrein was imminent, the British Government were compelled to expel the rival Sheikh from his asylum at Demaum.

1848.

1859.

Shortly afterwards the ruling Sheikh, on being remonstrated with on account of certain lawless acts, declared his allegiance first to Persia, and afterwards to Turkey. He was compelled by the British Resident to raise the blockade of the Wahabee ports which he had instituted, and, in 1861, a “Perpetual Treaty of Peace and Friendship” was concluded with him. By this the engagements entered into in 1820 were declared to be valid and in force, the Chief as “Independent Ruler of Bahrein” bound himself to abstain from prosecuting war, piracy, and slavery by sea, and the British Government on their part engaged to maintain the security of his territory against foreign aggression.

1861.

Her Majesty's Government, having concluded this Treaty with the Sheikh as an independent ruler, informed the Persian Government of what had taken place, and refused to concur in a proposal made by the Shah that the sovereignty of Bahrein should be transferred to the Persian Crown. Sir H. Rawlinson, then Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, expressed in forcible terms how indispensable the maintenance of the Sheikh's independence (of Persia) was “to the successful working of those plans of maritime police in the Persian Gulf which we have been at so much pains and expense to establish.”

Mr. Hertslet's Memorandum of March 1874, p. 13.

1869.

In 1868, in consequence of the intrigues of the Persian Government, who had encouraged the piratical faction, it was necessary for the Indian Government to take forcible action against the offending Chiefs, and a naval demonstration took place. In November 1869 further measures had to be adopted, two of the Chiefs were incarcerated in an Indian fortress, and, finally, Esa-bin-Ali, a member of the Khalifa family, was installed as ruling Sheikh of Bahrein, and has remained in power ever since.

1868.

1869.

In 1870 the Government of India wrote a full despatch reviewing the history of the island and emphasizing the importance of allowing no Persian claims to sovereignty to pass without firm remonstrance. The Duke of Argyll, then Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for India, concurred in this view.

In the autumn of 1871, during the progress of the Turkish expedition against Nejd, the murder of a Turkish messenger by order of the Chief of Bahrein reopened the question of the Ottoman claim to the island. This claim Her Majesty's Government had already refused to recognize on three occasions, in 1839, 1851, and 1870. At the request of Her Majesty's Ambassador, the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs eventually repeated the verbal assurances, formerly given by Aali Pasha, that the Porte did not entertain any intention of obtaining supremacy over Bahrein, Muscat, or the independent tribes of Southern Arabia, nor contemplate any attack upon them. (*Vide* Sir H. Elliot's despatch No. 399 of the 4th November, 1871.)

1871.

In October 1873 a question arose regarding the enforced enlistment of natives of Bahrein into the Turkish Army. A note was accordingly addressed to the Turkish Ambassador on the 14th April, 1874, which after drawing his Excellency's attention to previous communications, distinctly stated that Her Majesty's Government did not

1874.

admit the claim of Turkey to consider Bahrein as part of the Ottoman Dominions, and that, if natives of that island applied to British Consuls in Turkey for protection, the latter could not refuse their good offices on behalf of such persons.

To Sir H. Layard, No. 763, June 5, 1879.
Sir H. Layard, No. 504, June 16, 1879.
India Office, September 20, 1879.
Admiralty, May 14, 1880.

In June 1879 the British Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to make representations respecting a reported proposal to establish a Turkish coal depôt at Bahrein, and to urge the Porte to disavow the project. Action was also taken by the Indian Government in order to induce the Sheikh of Bahrein, in the event of the proposal being made to him, to act upon the advice of the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

An attempt was actually made in 1880 by a Turkish vessel to establish a coaling station at Bahrein, but was frustrated by the Sheikh, who refused permission for the undertaking.

As a result of this incident, the Sheikh was induced to conclude a Treaty with the British Government by which he undertook to abstain from entering into negotiations with any other Power, and to refuse permission to any other Government to establish agencies or coaling depôts on his territory.

1880.
1888-9. In 1888-9 the Turkish claim to Bahrein was reasserted and refuted. The Ottoman Government were informed that any attempt to land on the island would be opposed by force (*vide* despatches No. 15 of the 26th January, 1888, and No. 121 of the 17th April, 1888, to Sir W. White).

1892. A question of British protection over Bahreinese in Turkey arose in 1892 over the restitution of taxes levied at Bussorah, and Her Majesty's Ambassador reminded the Porte that, Bahrein being under British protection, Her Majesty's Government could not admit Turkish interference with the natives of the island.

To Sir C. Ford, No. 69, Telegraphic, November 10, 1892.

1892. A landing of Turkish troops was again apprehended in 1892, but the Porte was once more informed that British ships would oppose any such attempt.

1892. In 1892 an Agreement was made with the Chief of Bahrein providing against (1) conclusion of Treaties with foreign Powers, (2) residence of foreign Agents, (3) cession of territory.

1893. The question of British protection of Bahreinese in the Ottoman Dominions again arose in 1893, and Her Majesty's Government maintained the right of British Consular Representatives to give their good offices to Bahreinese applying for them, and the Porte was subsequently informed that Her Majesty's Government would extend their protection to them whenever there was occasion.

To Sir C. Ford, No. 111, May 2, 1893.
To Sir C. Ford, No. 322, December 6, 1893.

1895. In 1895 we forcibly dispersed, in the interests of the Bahrein Sheikh, a settlement of malcontents who had established themselves at Zobara, on the El Katr coast, under the Turkish flag. The Turks protested, but Her Majesty's Government stated in reply that "they did not recognize Turkish jurisdiction on the El Katr coast, and must repeat once more that all Turkish claims to Bahrein, which is under the protection of the Queen of England, are totally inadmissible."

Note verbatim of August 12, 1895, and to Anthonopoulos Pasha, December 5, 1896.

1896. The intervention of British Consuls in Turkey on behalf of Bahreinese was again insisted upon in 1896.

Sir P. Currie, No. 141, February 19, 1896.

1898. In 1898 the Indian Government formally recognized Sheikh Hamed as successor-designate to the Chiefship of the island.

India Office, January 5, 1899.

1900. In 1900 a British Agent, Mr. Gaskin, was stationed at Bahrein instead of the

native representative. In January 1905 the Government of India appointed Captain Prideaux, an officer of the regular political service, to succeed Mr. Gaskin, who was of lower official status. Subsequently, they conferred upon Captain Prideaux the personal and local rank of Political Agent. An assistant surgeon was also appointed at this time, and, in addition to attending on the Agency staff, he is in charge of a hospital, recently erected at the cost of certain British Indian merchants, in commemoration of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria; a guard, consisting of four officers and twenty-four sepoy, was stationed in the island; and a launch was provided to enable the Agent to visit the outlying portions of his charge, and for service in the suppression of piracy in the shallower water which a British gun-boat cannot reach. The use of the launch will confirm our title to police the pearl banks.

The reason for these measures was explained by the Government of India in a despatch dated the 21st April, 1904:—

The protection of the British Government had converted the island from a scene of chronic external aggression and intestine feud into a relatively peaceful and flourishing centre of industry and commerce; but, secure in the gratuitous enjoyment of the benefits thus conferred upon him, and oblivious of the past vicissitudes of the Khalifa family, the Chief had been induced, by the very moderation of the British Government, to the belief that his relations with them were of a kind involving no corresponding obligations on his part. The incorrectness of the Sheikh's attitude had been conspicuously noticeable in connection with the question of the Customs revenues (a point dealt with under a separate heading of this Memorandum). The Government of India were not then disposed on this account to have recourse to coercive measures, in the hope that the object in view would be effected by means which, if slower, might not prove less effective. They apprehended that the Sheikh would not be slow to recognize the significance of the means in question, and that a suitable officer would be able to bring pressure to bear in connection with the Customs question or any other matter. Apart, however, from affairs of domestic interest, the need for a more definite assertion of our position had recently come into greater prominence owing to the establishment of an enterprising German trader on the island, and by reason of the growing interest in this quarter displayed by foreigners of other nationalities.

The expectations of the Government of India as to the reformation of the Sheikh were unfortunately destined to be disappointed, and his incapacity as a Ruler found concrete expression in disturbances which took place in November 1904, when a German clerk was assaulted and several Persians were wounded.

In the case of the German, as a result of the action of the British Agent, full compensation was paid and condign punishment publicly inflicted. As to the Persians, the Sheikh remained obdurate, and a naval demonstration took place. A Memorandum of demands—including payment of a fine, the banishment of certain individuals, the formation of a guard for the bazaar, and an admission that *sukhra*, or forced labour, should not be imposed on foreigners—was presented to the Sheikh, and acceptance of it was enforced.

On the 27th July, 1904, the French Ambassador communicated a private Memorandum to Lord Lansdowne, suggesting that, as French citizens had established themselves at Bahrein for the purpose of pearl-fishing, the jurisdiction of the French Vice-Consul at Bushire should be extended to that island.

The India Office were disposed to agree to the proposal, provided the French Vice-Consul addressed his representations to the British Political Agent. On this point the Government of India stated that they would only recognize the French Vice-Consul at Bushire as Vice-Consul for Manama (Bahrein) on the clear understanding (1) that his exequatur be obtained from His Majesty's Government; (2) that his dealings be with the British Political Officer alone; (3) that he should acquire no extraterritorial jurisdiction. The Government of India further stated that they preferred postponement of the question until our position as regards the pearling banks had been established, especially as it had been raised in connection with the proposed pearling enterprise of the French, to which the Arabs objected. The

India Office,
November
6, 1905.

India Office,
June 8,
1904.

1904.

India Office,
November
29, 1904.

India Office
January 18,
1905.

1905.

Admiralty,
April 1,
1905.

India Office,
October 20,
1905.

1904.

Memoran-
dum com-
municated
by
M. Canhon,
July 27,
1904.

India Office,
August 31,
1904.

India Office
September
8, 1904.

Inclosure in India Office, October 15, 1904. Political Resident in the Persian Gulf stated that, subject to the conditions suggested by the India Office, the appointment would perhaps be a useful recognition of our quasi British Protectorate over Bahrein; and he should for this reason have recommended acceptance, if the motive had not been the admitted desire of French merchants to gain access to the pearl fisheries.

The Government of India were of opinion that the best solution was to drop the question, and this seems to have been done.

Bahrein Customs.

The administration of the Customs at Bahrein, which is a minor centre of the arms traffic, has for a considerable time engaged the anxious attention of the Government of India.

They are at present leased to and farmed by British-Indian Banias.

1898. So far back as 1898, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf broached the subject with the Chief, who gave Colonel Meade to understand that he would not renew the farmer's lease without first communicating with him. Despite this understanding, the lease was subsequently extended for a period of two years. Shortly afterwards the Sheikh again promised not to enter into any fresh contract without first informing the Resident. But in January 1900 Colonel Meade reported that the Sheikh had again departed from his engagements, and had prolonged the lease for a further term of two years, without previous intimation. A remonstrance was made, and the Chief expressed regret; but, nevertheless, when in 1901, at the instance of Sir N. O'Connor, it was again suggested that he should employ a British subject to supervise the Customs, he once more declined to accede to the wishes of His Majesty's Government.

1903. On the occasion of his tour in the Persian Gulf in 1903, the Viceroy spoke seriously about the matter to the Chief, and pointed out to him the necessity of a change in the existing arrangements. The Sheikh asked for time for reflection; but this only resulted in his reasserting his unwillingness to redress the abuses which had called forth complaints.

1904. The conclusions formulated on the subject by the Government of India are indicated in their despatch of the 21st April, 1904:—

"The need for reform is clearly indicated by the figures given in Colonel Kemball's letter. The Chief's present income from his Customs is 1,16,200 rupees, while the revenue which may be expected under an efficient system is estimated at 3,50,000 rupees. The practicability of the change is proved by the example of Muscat, where, in partial compliance with our wishes, the Sultan has taken the Customs administration under direct management, and has already reaped considerable benefit from the arrangement. The matter is obviously one to which we cannot remain indifferent. Committed, as we are, to the support of Sheikh Hamed, it is incumbent on us to take measures to insure that, on his accession, he may find his house in order, and may not be burdened with a heavy legacy of debt accumulated by the improvidence of his predecessor. For this reason we consider that the question is not one which can be allowed to drop, even if it were possible to overlook the Sheikh's repeated breaches of faith and his persistently contumacious attitude with regard to it. In fact, the reform of the Customs administration of Bahrein has become a test case of the nature and degree of the influence which the British Government may reasonably claim to exercise over the Ruler of those islands."

1906. In August 1906 a further attempt was made by the Resident to induce the Sheikh to intrust the collection of the customs to the Government of India for a specific sum, in place of farming them out to the Bania British Indian contractors. He declined to adopt this course, and the matter was temporarily allowed to drop. It is suggested that the real ground of the refusal is to be found in the fact that Bahrein is the centre of a large smuggling trade.

Judicial Powers exercised by the Political Agent at Bahrein.

1907. The Government of India raised this subject in their despatch of the 14th November, 1907, which is now under consideration, and of which the following is an extract:—

"The Agent has at present the powers of a Magistrate of the 1st class, as described in 'The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898,' in respect of offences committed by native Indian subjects of His Majesty in the Island of Bahrein and on the southern

shores of the Persian Gulf. He also extends his good offices* to European foreigners in any disputes between them and the Chief of Bahrein or his subjects.

"Next, he holds a Court, composed of himself and a representative of the Chief, for the trial of cases in which the accused is a Bahrein subject or a foreigner who prefers not to invoke British good offices, and the other party is a British or foreign subject who does so.

"Finally, he controls a local Court of Arbitration for the adjustment of civil disputes between British subjects and protégés on the one hand, and Bahrein subjects or persons of any other nationality, on the other hand. This Court has been in existence for over fifty years.

"He also, on occasions, issues bills of health, signs marine protests, and legalizes signatures on behalf of British Indian subjects. Strictly speaking, however, he has no legal authority for undertaking these latter duties.

"With a view to define and regularize the powers exercised over British subjects by the Agent, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf has put forward the suggestion that he should be appointed to be a Justice of the Peace and endowed with the powers of a District Judge in direct subordination to the High Court of Bombay. We concur in this recommendation, but, with reference to clause 2 of 'The Indian Foreign Jurisdiction Order in Council, 1902,' we understand that it would first be necessary for Bahrein to be declared by His Majesty in Council to be a territory in which jurisdiction is exercised by, or on behalf of, His Majesty through the Governor-General in Council. We would accordingly request that, if His Majesty's Government see no objection, the necessary Order in Council may be passed providing for the exercise of jurisdiction in Bahrein.

"But further, in view of the increase of foreign shipping and foreign interest generally in the Gulf, and of the establishment of foreign firms and missions in Bahrein, which has already caused practical difficulties, it seems desirable that, if possible, in maintenance of the *status quo* in the Gulf, provision should be made in the Order in Council for the exercise by the Political Agent of jurisdiction over foreigners in Bahrein, before foreign interests have so largely developed as to render the assumption of the legal duties of a Protecting Power a matter of greater intricacy and difficulty involving perhaps, as in the case of Zanzibar, diplomatic representations to foreign Powers. Bahrein has been under sole British domination since 1820, and on several occasions we have had to interfere by armed force, either to prevent the Chief of Bahrein from attacking his neighbours, or them from attacking him, or to settle matters relating to the Chiefship. In 1880, by a Treaty published for public information, the Sheikh bound himself to abstain from making Treaties of any sort with any State or Government other than the British, and to refuse to permit other Powers to establish Diplomatic or Consular Agencies or coaling depôts without the consent of the British Government. This Treaty in itself constituted a sort of protectorate, which has perhaps been ripened into maturity by the open and regular exercise of protectorate powers, more especially in the recent cases of attacks on Persian and German subjects in Bahrein. . . .

"If His Majesty's Government consider it feasible in the circumstances to assume jurisdiction over foreigners in Bahrein, we would recommend that this should be done, and also that the Order in Council should, if possible, be so framed as to enable the Political Agent to perform the functions of a notary public."

Summary.

The political position at Bahrein may be summarized as follows:—

His Majesty's Government have repudiated the Persian claim to sovereignty nine times—in 1822, 1825, 1844, 1848, 1861, 1862, 1869, 1906, and 1907, and the Turkish claim nineteen times—in 1839, 1851, 1870, 1874 (twice), 1875, 1876, 1879, 1888, 1892 (twice), 1893 (three times), 1895 (twice), 1896, and 1905 (twice); while in 1871 the Grand Vizier of Turkey gave a formal assurance "that the Porte entertained no intention whatever of obtaining the supremacy over Bahrein."

On the other hand, His Majesty's Government have themselves had direct relations with Bahrein since 1805; these relations have become increasingly intimate in

* *Vide* Secret despatch from Secretary of State, dated June 21, 1901.

character, and have found concrete expression in a series of Treaties concluded in 1820, 1847, 1856, 1861, 1868, 1880, and 1892, and having as their objects the suppression of piracy and the slave trade, the regularity of the succession to the throne, the protection of the island against foreign control or aggression, and the assertion of British predominance. His Majesty's Government have repeatedly, and with increasing authority, intervened in the internal affairs of the island, notably in 1845, in 1859 when the rival Sheikh was incarcerated in an Indian fortress, in 1861, in 1869 when a naval demonstration took place, in 1898 to recognize the ruling Sheikh's son as successor-designate to the Chiefship, and again in 1904-5 forcibly to effect the punishment of offenders who had assailed German and Persian subjects, and to remove certain abuses affecting public security and the welfare of foreigners. Moreover, in virtue of the Treaty of 1861, the British Agent has exercised important judicial powers in the island for over fifty years; for nearly a century the safety of the pearl industry, of which Bahrein is the centre, has been assured by British ships; and British Consular protection has been regularly afforded to Bahreinese in Turkey and in Persia.

It would now seem to be matter for serious consideration whether the time has not arrived to regularize the position at Bahrein by a more definite assertion of British predominance. The Government of India, in their despatch already quoted (see p. 18), have set forth the arguments in favour of the exercise of jurisdiction over foreigners, and the advantages of adopting such a course before foreign interests have so largely developed as to render the assumption of the legal duties of a Protecting Power a matter of greater intricacy and difficulty.

The question arises whether it would not be more practicable and be less likely to evoke hostile comment if the assumption of these duties (which would probably necessitate a notification to foreign Powers) were accompanied by various administrative reforms, which, carried out under British control, would conduce to the general prosperity of commerce, check the traffic in arms which now exists, and gradually place the revenue of the Sheikh upon a more stable footing.

That such reforms are desirable has been recognized by the Government of India in earlier despatches; unfortunately, though steps in the right direction have been taken, no substantial improvement has been effected since the Native Agent was succeeded by a British Agent in 1900. Writing in this year, Mr. Zwemer, an American missionary resident at Bahrein, asserted that:—

"Oppression, blackmail, and bribery are universal, and except in commerce and the Slave Trade, English protection has brought about no reforms in the island. To be 'protected' means here strict neutrality as to the internal affairs, and absolute dictation as to affairs with other Governments."

It is much to be regretted that the negotiations for the control of the customs proved abortive, and, in view of the increasing importance of Bahrein, it is worth while considering whether the Sheikh should not be offered a large subsidy in return for the customs, which, under British control, would, no doubt, give a far larger yield. It is eminently desirable in the interests of the island that the finances should be reformed, in order that certain public works, and more especially harbour accommodation and the construction of a pier, may be undertaken. The development of trade on any considerable scale is largely dependent upon the execution of such works. Moreover, it is incumbent upon the Government of India to take timely steps to provide against a deficit on the demise of the present Sheikh, to whose successor, Sheikh Hamed, they are committed.

The Customs question has also separate importance in connection with the Arms Traffic.

It should be borne in mind that at one period Bahrein was renowned for its fertility, and that it is capable under wise government of becoming so again. It possesses an excellent water supply, and the climate is far more suited to Europeans than that of Kishm or Muscat. Situated about half way between Cape Musandim and the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, in geographical position it possesses advantages as a trade centre which are superior to those of any other place in the Gulf under present conditions. Some idea of the commerce of the island may be derived from the fact that the export of pearls from there was 475,000*l.* in 1901, and the total trade of Bahrein increased 30 per cent. between 1905 and 1906, when it reached 1,454,000*l.* exclusive of pearls. Of the steam tonnage entered in the port in 1906, British vessels represented 100,983 tons; American, 3,943; and German, 6,205.

If a British "Commissioner" with commercial aptitudes could be appointed to control the customs and gradually to facilitate the establishment of a trade emporium and of an open market, such action would go far to promote the commercial interests of this country. Moreover, such a state of affairs could not fail to attract in still greater numbers than at present the merchants of Lingah and other places, where the appearance of the Belgian Customs officials has given rise to much dissatisfaction.

It appears very desirable to anticipate German action by opening a bank at Bahrein, and some Bombay house might be approached in this connection.

Bahrein being the centre of the pearl industry, and in close proximity to the coast of El Katif, which is infested with pirates, the installation of wireless telegraphic communication between the island and His Majesty's ships would prove of value, while the commercial advantages of establishing telegraphic intercourse with the outside world are apparent.

Writing in 1904 Sir N. O'Connor, who had been consulted in regard to the steps which were in contemplation for improving the status and position of the British Agent, replied that he had felt strongly for some years past that we were losing the opportunity of asserting our supremacy at Bahrein, that he sincerely welcomed the proposals of the Government of India, and that he undertook that the Turkish Government should raise no serious difficulties.

Sir Lewis Pelly, writing in 1863, strongly advocated the establishment of a free port under British control in the Persian Gulf. He wrote as follows:—

"The case of Hormuz is a precedent for a like station; the interferences, incertitude, and want of accurate knowledge of the market all round the Gulf point to the alleviation of these evils by the creation of a general entrepôt at a convenient point, where all vessels would, if they pleased to call, find cargo ready; whereto all boats finding a favourable chance for exports from their several jurisdictions could run a cargo in a few days, and where to all trade might converge, as circumstances admitted, from ports subjected to sudden, but not permanent, arbitrary interference."

"My respectful suggestion to Government is, that the formation of a port so concentrating all our interests would do more to create and to develop the trade of the Gulf and Bussorah line, and would do more to keep the Government accurately informed as to their relations and the condition of commerce in the Gulf, and would further do more to keep the maritime Arabs quiet, and to afford an issue for whatever capabilities of trade may be possessed by Arabia, than could all the reports, all the figured statements, and all the amicable interviews of all the Residents and all the native authorities, that ever had, or may have, place round these waters."

"But the port must be really free, and all tribes and people must know and feel it to be free; and that, once there, their goods and persons are secure and unmolested. Let the authorities of the port limit their functions to keeping the peace, removing obstacles, enforcing valid contracts, and punishing mercantile crime, for the rest, leave all to private enterprise, and leave trade free as the tide to flow in and out. I think that thus only can we practically test the commercial capabilities of the Gulf."

(d.) *El Katr, or Guttur.*

The El Katr peninsula lies south of Ujair, in the district of El Katif. Ujair is the most southerly point to which, with the important exception of Koweit, His Majesty's Government have recognized continuous Turkish influence.

On the other hand, it is north of El Odeid, to which, in 1878, the Sheikh of Abu Dthabi was allowed to assert his rights of possession, and which now forms the western limit of the territories of the Trucial Chiefs.

The greater part of the country between El Katif and El Odeid is sparsely inhabited by Bedouin tribes who find pasturage there for their flocks. On the coast are fishing villages, such as Ujair, Zobara, Khor Hassan, El Bidaa and Wakra, the most considerable being El Bidaa.

The question of sovereignty over El Katr has never been definitely decided, and to some extent this region has been regarded as debateable land, between Oman on the one side, and the Wahabee power on the other. At one time the Chief of Abu Dthabi is said to have exercised authority on the actual peninsula. Later the Uttoobes, having settled there and at Bahrein, became paramount. These in turn had to pay religious tithe to the Wahabee Amir, who established a Governor of his own at

Sir N. O'Connor, No. 511, June 28, 1904.

Sir C. Ford, No. 153, April 23, 1893.

Atchison's Treaties, vol. 10.

India Office, September 17, 1879.

India Office Memorandum, June 30, 1888.

El Bidaa; and threatened to occupy the Bahrein Islands in 1851. This was prevented by the appearance on the scene of British vessels of war, and an arrangement was come to by which the town of El Bidaa was restored to the Bahrein Chief.

There was considerable correspondence in 1872 about a Turkish expedition to Nejd. As a result the Turks remained established in the El Hasa district, and at El Katif on the coast, while a military post was created at El Bidaa, and has been maintained there ever since.

A question was raised at this time as to certain rights claimed by the Sheikh of Bahrein over the mainland coast, and in regard to the *status* of El Odeid.

The British Resident, Colonel Pelly, was of opinion that, while Bahrein should be acknowledged to possess certain rights in regard to pasturage, &c., those rights should not be held as empowering the Sheikh to put to sea for the purpose of coercing any port in El Katr. He regarded El Odeid as properly belonging to Abu Dhabbi.

In a Memorandum by the Rev. Mr. Badger on Turkish claims to Oman, he wrote that the native annals of the province incontrovertibly prove that it became independent of the Bagdad Khalifate in the 10th century, and had never since been subject to foreign rule except to the Persians for a short time. He went on to say that the same was true of the Arab Chieftoms in the Persian Gulf, and that their independence was virtually admitted by Turkey in 1847.

On the 7th May, 1883, Lord Granville wrote to Musurus Pasha that "the claim of the Porte to rights of sovereignty over the El Katr coast has never been admitted by Her Majesty's Government."

In 1895 Her Majesty's Government forcibly dispersed, in the interests of the Bahrein Sheikh, a settlement of malcontents who had established themselves at Zobara, on the El Katr coast, under the Turkish flag (see p. 16). The Turks protested, but Her Majesty's Government stated in reply that they did not recognize Turkish jurisdiction on the El Katr coast (*note verbale* of the 12th August 1895).

The present position is, therefore, that we have refused to recognize Turkish authority in El Katr, although we have acquiesced in the continued presence of a Turkish post since 1872 at El Bidaa. We did, however, object to an attempt by the Turkish Government to appoint a Mudirat Wakra, a point south of El Bidaa; and after considerable pressure they cancelled the appointment.

The Government of India were not completely satisfied with this result, and desired to round off their relations with the various Arab Chiefs by making an agreement with the leading Sheikh of El Katr.

A former Agreement was concluded in 1868 with the then Sheikh, by which he bound himself to take no hostile action by sea, and to refer all disputes to the British Resident. On the death of this Sheikh, his successor, Sheikh Jasim, applied for a renewal of the Agreement, but this was refused (in 1882) on the ground of the nature of his relations with the Turks.

In 1904 the Government of India expressed forcibly their view that a Treaty should be negotiated with Sheikh Ahmed, in anticipation of the death of Sheikh Jasim, who had then reached an advanced age. An opportunity of making such a Treaty had arisen through the disturbance of the *status quo* by the Turkish Government, who had appointed officials to Wakra and other places on the coast. The Government of India at first proposed that a Treaty should be entered into with Sheikh Ahmed on the lines of the existing Treaties with Bahrein and the Trucial Chiefs, by which he would be debarred from parting with territory to others than the British Government. Although in deference to British remonstrances the Turkish Government had at length withdrawn their interloping officials, the Government of India remained of opinion that the position of Great Britain should be consolidated by the immediate conclusion with Sheikh Ahmed of a Treaty similar to the former one (of 1868), if the stricter form of Treaty with Bahrein and the Trucial Chiefs were held to be inadmissible.

The principal reasons adduced in favour of this course were—

1. The El Katr Coast, lying as it does between Bahrein and the Pirate Coast, constitutes a break in the continuity of British maritime influence.

2. The absence of a Treaty does not facilitate, and may considerably increase, the work of His Majesty's ships in suppressing piracy and maintaining the peace of the Gulf. In this connection it is observed that one objection to the extension of Turkish authority in those regions is the inability of the Turks to establish a strong Administration, which is eminently desirable in a district which, owing to its proximity to

Bahrein—the centre of the pearl fisheries—affords exceptional inducements to pirates and marauders.

These considerations did not, however, overcome the disinclinations of His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, who was keenly alive to the difficulties which such a course might provoke with the Ottoman Government. His Excellency laid stress upon the multiplicity of pending questions with Turkey, such as the energetic action being taken to secure the removal of the Turkish post from Bubiyan Island, and he was distinctly of opinion that, under existing circumstances, the conclusion of a Treaty as proposed would be inopportune.

It was decided that the question should be submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defence, who do not appear to have recorded any definite opinion.

In a Minute dated the 5th February, 1905, Lord Lansdowne wrote as follows:—

"I feel strongly that the time has come when all these questions should be considered, not as we have been in the habit of considering them—piecemeal and as they arise—but as parts of a Persian Gulf policy, the principles of which should be carefully laid down for our guidance."

(c.) *The Wahabees.*

To appreciate the present political conditions and recent history of Arabia it is necessary to go back to the year 1742, which marks the rise of the remarkable Wahabee movement, which was at the bottom of all the political changes that the peninsula has seen since that time.

Colonel Pelly alluded to the subject in the following terms:—

"It is this Nejd power, occupying the wide centre of Adnan Arabia, and composed of nomadic or only partially stationary Arab tribes, some now in revolt and some now used for quelling revolt, that threatens or dominates all round the shore-line from the back of the Euphrates and Shat-el-Arab, down along the Pirate Coast, and thence round Cape Musandim, along Muscat, Oman, to Ras-el-Had, on the Aden line.

"It was a Kazeer or Mullah of Bussorah, named Wahab, who (or whose son), permeating these tribes with the metamorphic agency of a religious idea, fused them into an aggressive mass, which, cropping out along the shore-lines of Muscat and the western coast of the Persian Gulf, compelled all these subdued tribes into plunder and piracy. Hence the once notorious appearance of the maritime Arabs as pirates; hence our expeditions to the west coast of the Gulf; and hence the Ras-el-Kheimahs and Benibu-Afis blending with our colours. An Arab Sheikh endeavoured to explain to me the nature of this unending Wahabee power by likening it to the agency of Lord Clive in conquering India with a sepoy army. The leading tenets* of Wahab's faith seem to have been those common to prophets, to proclaim himself and the unity of the Creator and kill or plunder his immortal creatures."

British Relations with the Wahabees.

[Communicated by the India Office.]

In April 1866 the then Wahabee Amir, Imam Abdullah-bin-Fysul, entered into a voluntary engagement with the British Government (in the form of a declaration, which was not signed on our side), by which he bound himself—

1. Not to oppose or injure British subjects residing in territories under his authority.
2. Not to "injure or attack the territories of the Arab tribes in alliance with the British Government, specially on the Kingdom of Muscat, further than in receiving the *zukat* that has been customary of old."

* What most offended the rigid monotheism of Wahab's philosophy was the almost universal visitation of shrines, invocation of saints, and honour paid to the tomb of Mahommed. The use of the rosary, of jewels, wine, and tobacco were all abominations to be eschewed. On the other hand, the prophet married twenty wives, and died at the age of 95 after begetting eighteen children.

With the decline of the Wahabee power and the withdrawal of their influence from politics on the coast, the above engagement ceased to be of practical value, and all relations between the Wahabees and ourselves came to an end. It is worth recording that in October 1901, at a time of serious intertribal disturbances in the interior of Arabia, we came to an understanding with the Turkish Government that we would do what we could to discourage the Sheikh of Koweit from aggressive action, on the understanding that the Turks would endeavour to restrain the Amir of Nejd.

The successes of the present Wahabee Amir, Abdul Aziz-bin-Saoud, over his rival the Amir of Nejd (Abdul Aziz-bin-Rashid) again brought the Wahabee question to the front. In February 1904, when the Government of India were considering a proposal to send an Agent to Riyadh, the Wahabee capital, for the purpose of collecting information on Central Arabian affairs, Mr. Brodrick telegraphed to the Viceroy as follows:—

"No steps should be taken to enter into closer relations with Nejd, or send Agents there, without previous sanction of His Majesty's Government."

Sir N. O'Connor, who was consulted, while recognizing the advantages of obtaining fuller information as to affairs in the interior of Arabia, held that the moment was not opportune for the action suggested; and to this opinion the Government of India, after receiving the views of Colonel Kemball, the Resident in the Persian Gulf, subscribed in a despatch dated the 24th March, 1904. They considered, however, that, in view of recent developments of the situation, there was reason to think that "it may shortly be incumbent on us to take a more lively interest in the affairs of Central Arabia," and they added that: "later, . . . when the political situation in Nejd has developed, and above all if the present representative of the Wahabee family . . . succeeds in establishing and extending his ascendancy, which from the latest accounts received seems to be not improbable, we think that it may be desirable again to enter into relations with our old ally."

The successes of Bin Saoud in April 1904 led the Turkish Government to send troops and guns to the assistance of Bin Rashid. Bin Saoud thereupon wrote to the Resident in the Persian Gulf on the 2nd May, 1904, protesting against the Turkish invasion and soliciting the protection of Great Britain for himself and his country. At the same time the Resident received from Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit a letter addressed to the latter by Bin Saoud, in which he hinted that, if he failed to obtain British protection, he might have to fall back on the Russian offer of assistance made to him in 1903. The Government of India, in reporting this on the 20th May, suggested that it might become necessary to revive the proposal to post a British Resident at Koweit, in order to watch events, should the Turks persist in armed intervention.

Sir N. O'Connor had already been instructed, on the 10th May, 1904, to point out to the Porte that His Majesty's Government, in the hope of assisting to preserve the peace, had "employed special efforts to dissuade the Sheikh of Koweit from taking part, even indirectly, in the hostilities that have broken out," and to protest against any action being taken by the Turkish Government "which might add still further to the disturbed condition of this part of Arabia." On receipt of the Viceroy's telegram of the 20th May, 1904, Sir N. O'Connor was further instructed by telegraph to communicate at once with the Porte, and to repeat in urgent terms the representations he had already been instructed to make.

Sir N. O'Connor replied on the 23rd May that it was difficult to see on what grounds the Porte could be pressed to refrain from assisting the Amir of Nejd, who was the party attacked. He considered that we should confine ourselves for the present to maintaining intact the territory of Koweit and awaiting developments, but that, if the Turks persisted in rendering assistance to Bin Rashid, it might be expedient to reconsider the question of appointing a British Resident at Koweit.

The substance of Sir N. O'Connor's views was telegraphed to India on the 24th May. In reply, the Government of India, in a telegram dated the 29th May, suggested that Sir N. O'Connor should be instructed to inform the Porte that we had no desire to assist Bin Saoud directly or indirectly, but that if, as a result of Turkish support, Bin Rashid became unduly powerful, our interests in Eastern Arabia might be injuriously affected. They held that British prestige at Koweit would be impaired if, by preventing Mubarak from assisting his friend and ally Bin Saoud, and by stopping the importation of arms, we allowed Turkish influence to determine the supremacy of the Turkish nominee in Central Arabia. Their conclusions were that

an Agent should be sent to Koweit, and that the arms trade there should not be interfered with.

The proposal to send an officer as Political Agent to Koweit was approved by His Majesty's Government, and the Government of India were informed accordingly on the 24th June, 1904. It was decided at the same time to defer for the present any fresh measures for the prevention of the importation of arms at Koweit. Captain Knox, the officer appointed, proceeded to Koweit in August 1904.

Towards the end of August 1904 the Turks, who had hitherto supported Bin Rashid, made overtures to Bin Saoud, and the latter applied to Sheikh Mubarak for advice as to how the Turkish advances should be met. Mubarak approached the Political Agent at Koweit on the subject in October 1904, but Captain Knox informed him that he had no instructions to give advice, and that Bin Saoud should consult his own interests in the matter. On the 30th December, 1904, Mr. Brodrick telegraphed to the Government of India that "His Majesty's Government desire that it should be clearly understood that their interest and influence are to be confined strictly to coast-line of Eastern Arabia, and that nothing should be said or done to connect them even indirectly with warfare now in progress in interior. They agree that Knox should give no opinion on advice to be given by Mubarak to Bin Saoud, but should repeat to former warnings already given against entanglements in interior." It may be added that in February 1905 a meeting took place at Koweit between Sheikh Mubarak, the Turkish Vali of Bussorah, and Bin Saoud's father, and Bin Saoud seems subsequently to have come to terms, for the time being, with the Turkish Government.

Towards the end of 1905 Bin Saoud, whose successes in Nejd had continued unabated, paid a visit to El Katr and addressed letters to the Sheikhs of the Pirate Coast, announcing his intention of visiting their territories in the following spring. The most important of the Trucial Chiefs, the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, conferred personally with the Sultan of Muscat on the situation, both Rulers regarding the prospect of Bin Saoud's visit with considerable apprehension.

The Government of India addressed the Secretary of State on the subject in a despatch dated the 11th January, 1906, in which they pointed out "how very serious to our prestige and influence the consequences might be if Bin Saoud should attack the Pirate Coast Chiefs or the Sultan of Muscat, or succeed in extending his influence over them, and how important it is that we should prevent, as far as lies in our power, such a contingency, especially now that the Wahabee Amir has recognized the suzerainty of the Sultan." They accordingly proposed that inquiry should be made, either through Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit or through the Sultan of Muscat, as to Bin Saoud's intentions, with a view to ascertaining "whether he is prepared to stand by the engagement of his predecessors not to oppose or injure British subjects residing in his territories, and not to interfere with the Arab tribes in alliance with the British Government"; and that, failing a satisfactory assurance on his part, he should be warned that interference in those localities would be regarded as an unfriendly act, and that "suitable measures would be taken to frustrate it." "These measures," the despatch concluded, "might amount, in our opinion, to a more stringent embargo on the import of arms at Koweit and elsewhere on the Arabian coast of the Gulf, or even, in the case of an attack being imminent, to actual armed assistance from British ships to the Sheikhs threatened, as might be necessary."

In communicating this despatch to the Foreign Office, some doubt was expressed as to the practicability of the Government of India's suggestions, and it was suggested that no steps should be taken, "in the absence of any urgent necessity caused by Wahabee action," until Sir N. O'Connor had been consulted on the proposal to approach Bin Saoud otherwise than through the medium of the Turks.

Meanwhile, on the 19th January, 1906, Captain Knox, the Political Agent at Koweit, had talked the matter over informally with Mubarak, and after inquiring as to the truth of the reports regarding Bin Saoud's intentions, gave the Sheikh a hint that any interference by the Wahabee Amir in the affairs of States in Treaty relation with us would not be likely to find favour with the British Government. Mubarak replied that he regarded Bin Saoud's plans as designed merely to extort money from the Sheikhs on the coast, and that he had himself written to Bin Saoud strongly advising him against persisting in any such attempt. Major Cox, in reporting this conversation to the Government of India, suggested that he should be authorized to

Mr. Brodrick's telegram, June 24, 1904.

Captain Knox to Captain Trevor, October 17, 1904.

Mr. Brodrick's telegram, December 30, 1904.

Mr. Townley to Foreign Office, February 12 and 17, 1905.

Captain Trevor to Government of India, October 29, 1905.

Government of India's letter, January 11, 1906.

India Office to Foreign Office, February 22, 1906.

Major Cox to Government of India, February 4, 1906.

inform all the Trucial Chiefs that the Government of India "would not regard with complacency the intrigues of any of them with Bin Saoud."

The Government of India telegraphed on the 15th March, 1906, supporting Major Cox's suggestion, which was approved, with the concurrence of the Foreign Office, by Mr. Morley's telegram dated the 9th April.

Sir N.
O'Connor,
March 20,
1906.

As regards the warning to Bin Saoud contemplated by the Government of India, the Foreign Office adopted the views of Sir N. O'Connor, who had been consulted and had recommended in a despatch dated the 20th March, 1906, that any such warning should be conveyed direct to Bin Saoud, and not through the agency of the Sheikh of Koweit or the Sultan of Muscat. Sir N. O'Connor further suggested that Bin Saoud, in the event of his visiting the coast, should be met by a British vessel of war at one of the places which he proposed to visit, and told that no tampering with the engagements and Conventions of the Trucial Chiefs would be permitted.

Mr.
Morley's
despatch,
April 13,
1906.

In conveying the decision of His Majesty's Government to the Government of India, the Secretary of State wrote as follows in a despatch dated the 13th April, 1906:—

"His Majesty's Government accept the view that a warning to the Amir would be necessary if he were to carry out his reported intention. They consider, however, that it would be better that such warning should be conveyed to him only in the event of his appearing upon the coast, and that it should then be conveyed to him directly as proposed by Sir N. O'Connor."

Major Cox
to Govern-
ment of
India, April
5, 1906.

Bin Saoud's reply to Mubarak's letter of advice was communicated to the Political Agent, Koweit, on the 25th February, 1906. Major Cox described it as a "very courteous response." The terms of Bin Saoud's letter, as translated from the vernacular, are obscure, but his apparent object was to disclaim any intention of objectionable action. As a matter of fact, Bin Saoud did not visit the Pirate Coast.

In April 1906 news was received of the defeat and death of Bin Rashid at the hands of his rival, Bin Saoud.

Major Cox
to Govern-
ment of
India,
September
16 1906.

On the 16th September, 1906, Major Cox again raised the question of entering into closer relations with the interior of Arabia. He drew attention to overtures that had been made by and on behalf of Bin Saoud with a view to the establishment of a closer connection between himself and the British Government, and recommended that the opportunity should be taken to come to terms with the Wahabee Chief on the following grounds:—

1. That overtures had been made at various times by Bin Saoud himself, and by Sheikh Jasim-bin-Thani of Katr and Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit on Bin Saoud's behalf, with a view to securing for the latter some measure of British protection, and that if we neglected these overtures Bin Saoud and his following might regard us with hostility.

2. That if a friendly understanding were to exist between the British Government and Bin Saoud, both the Sultan of Muscat and the Trucial Chiefs would be fortified by the knowledge that any attempt on the part of the Wahabee to make a descent upon Oman would involve a preliminary rupture between him and the British Government.

3. That if Bin Saoud were our friend he would be able to assist us in suppressing piracies in the northern part of the Gulf.

4. That such a friendly understanding would facilitate Major Cox's dealings with the Trucial Chiefs and would render it possible for our officers to make occasional tours in the Nejd country.

5. That the Arabs of Central Arabia, apparently driven to desperation by Turkish interference, seemed disposed to make common cause to throw off the yoke, and were apparently trying to secure the support of the Sheikh of Koweit and even of the Sheikh of Mohammerah. Realizing, however, that they were not strong enough to stand alone, they saw the necessity of enlisting the support of a Christian Power, and if we did not respond they might approach some other Power.

It may be explained that, in addition to the overtures of Sheikh Mubarak and Sheikh Jasim, the subject had also been broached by an emissary of Bin Saoud himself, one Musaad-bin-Suweilim, who arrived at Bahrein in January 1906 and informed the British Agent there that Bin Saoud now felt himself strong enough

to turn the Turks out of Hassa and Katif, and then wished to enter into Treaty relations with the British Government, allowing us, if we desired, to keep a Political Officer in Hassa or Katif in return for our protecting him from a sea attack by the Turks.

Major Cox's letter of the 16th September, 1906, was sent home for information in the ordinary course, without comment, in October 1906. On the 9th November Mr. Morley informed the Government of India by telegram that "His Majesty's Government maintain view that their interest and influence should be confined to coast." "No steps," the telegram added, "should be taken to enter into relations with Nejd or to send Agents into interior without my previous sanction."

Mr.
Morley's
telegram,
November
9, 1906.

Bin Saoud lost little time in renewing his application. In October 1906 he sent a further message through Sheikh Jasim, in which his proposals were set forth in greater detail. This message, which was delivered by Sheikh Jasim to the interpreter of the British Political Agent, Bahrein, was thus reported by Captain Prideaux on the 17th November, 1906:—

Captain
Prideaux to
Major Cox,
November
17, 1906.

"The resources of Nejd are stated to have been strained to the utmost by the recent internecine wars, and Bin Saoud considers that the oases of Hassa and Katif were always the most profitable possessions of his Wahabee ancestors. He is anxious, therefore, to recover the two districts, and he proposes that a secret understanding should be arranged between the British Government and himself, under which he should be granted British protection from Turkish assaults at sea, in the event of his ever succeeding in driving the Turks, unaided, out of his ancestral dominions. In return for this protection the Amir is willing to bind himself to certain agreements (probably similar to those of the Trucial Chiefs), and to accept a Political Officer to reside at his Court. The details of this Secret Treaty he wishes to be settled or discussed at an interview which he is ready to give me, either in person or with his brother representing him, at some convenient rendezvous in the desert. Bin Saoud is determined to make an effort to obtain possession of Hassa and Katif, for without the additional revenue which he can derive from these tracts he admits that he is unable to control the tribes who menace the highways of commerce and pilgrimage. He proposes, therefore, in the first place, to apply to the Sultan for the *Mutasarrif-lik* (Governorship) of the districts, and to throw off the Turkish yoke as soon as he considers the moment favourable after establishing himself. If his application is refused, he will invade the districts as soon as he is ready, and, having captured them, he will appeal openly to the British Government for protection. If he fails, he will never betray the secret understanding between himself and the Government. Possibly he will not make his attempt even for four or five years more."

In forwarding Captain Prideaux's Report to the Government of India, Major Cox, in a letter dated the 24th November, 1906, urged the necessity of an "authoritative" reply being returned to the "references made through the local officers by Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit and Sheikh Jasim of Katr on behalf of Bin Saoud—references which have in no way been courted, but which I cannot leave unanswered without incurring among the Chiefs concerned a reputation for personal negligence or discourtesy, which would be prejudicial to my work in other ways."

Major Cox
to Govern-
ment of
India,
November
24, 1906.

These papers were sent home for information in the ordinary course by the Government of India without comment in January 1907. In a telegram dated the 9th February, 1907, the Government of India were asked for an expression of their views as to the answer to be returned to Sheikh Jasim. They replied as follows on the 15th February:—

Viceroy's
telegram,
February
15, 1907.

"We are sending despatch reviewing situation in Eastern Arabia, and suggesting that answer be conveyed to Bin Saoud to the effect that British Government, while anxious to maintain friendly relations with him so long as he comports himself in a manner consonant with British interests and our engagements with Arab Sheikhs on coast, see no necessity at present for making him any formal promises of the protection which might even have effect of stimulating Turkish opposition to consolidation of his authority. Answer might be conveyed orally through Sheikh Jasim or such other agency as our Resident in the Persian Gulf may recommend."

The promised despatch was sent on the 21st February, 1907. In it the Government of India reviewed the position of His Majesty's Government in regard to Nejd affairs since 1904. They expressed the view that matters were rapidly approaching a crisis, which would compel us to make up our minds as to our policy towards Central Arabia. They considered the prospects of Turkey re-establishing her

Government
of India,
February
21, 1907.

authority in Eastern Arabia to be remote, and even contemplated the prospect of the Turks disappearing altogether from the whole of Arabia south of Zobeir. At the same time they held that the establishment of the Wahabee power would be a menace to our position at Koweit as well as on the Pirate Coast. In regard to the question immediately at issue, they recommended that a reply should be returned to Bin Saoud's overtures in the terms set forth in their telegram of the 15th February.

Sir N.
O'Connor,
April 1,
1907.

Mr. Morley
to Govern-
ment of
India, May
3, 1907

Sir N. O'Connor, who was consulted, took the view that it would be most unwise for His Majesty's Government to entangle themselves with Bin Saoud or in any other way to interfere in the internal affairs of Arabia.

The reply of His Majesty's Government to the Government of India's representations was conveyed in Mr. Morley's despatch of the 3rd May, 1907, in the following terms:—

"After carefully considering, in consultation with His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, the views expressed by your Excellency's Government as to the general situation in Central Arabia, His Majesty's Government see no reason to modify the policy laid down in my predecessor's telegram of the 30th December, 1904, and repeated in my telegram of the 9th November, 1906, that British interests and influence in those regions should be strictly confined to the coast; and they agree with Sir N. O'Connor that it would be most unwise for them to entangle themselves with the Wahabee Amir or in any other way to interfere in the internal affairs of Arabia.

"The terms of the reply, which in paragraph 11 of your letter you propose to return to Bin Saoud, appear to His Majesty's Government to be open to objection, as implying an approval of the consolidation of the Wahabee power, and consequently a certain interference in Arabian affairs. No such communication should therefore be made. But if Major Cox finds it impossible to avoid giving some answer to those who have approached him on the Wahabee Amir's behalf, he should inform them, as Bin Saoud's proposals involve considerations which it is impossible for His Majesty's Government to maintain, that no reply is to be expected."

So far as is known, Bin Saoud's advances were not renewed during the year 1907.

(f.) *Turkey and Koweit.*

Turkey.

Ujair, in the district of El Katif, is the most southerly point to which, with the important exception of Koweit, His Majesty's Government have recognized continuous Turkish influence. This influence was confirmed by the expedition to Nejd in 1871, with the result that the Turks have remained established at El Katif and in the El Hasa district ever since.

The administration is disorderly and, owing to the half-hearted co-operation of the local authorities, British naval officers have been repeatedly thwarted in their attempts to capture pirates, with whom this district is a favourite resort.

The Arabian coast north of Katif, all the way to Koweit Bay, is without a single large settlement. Mostly barren and in the hands of the predatory and warlike tribe of Bni Hajar, it is very uninteresting and entirely unproductive.

North of Koweit, Turkish territory extends to the western shore of the island of El Khizo, and includes Fao, where there is a British telegraph office, on the River Shat-el-Arab.

Much correspondence took place between 1887 and 1897 respecting the creation of fortified works at Fao, and Her Majesty's Government energetically opposed these works. A full statement on the subject is contained in an India Office Memorandum dated the 21st June, 1897.

Foreign
Office,
Library No.
8799, Confi-
dential.

Captain Smyth, who was sent on a special mission to the Persian Gulf in 1904, reported as follows:—

"Fao is not a fort in any sense of the word; there are no fortifications and no guns."

Piracy on the Shat-el-Arab has formed a continual source of anxiety to the British authorities charged with the security of life and property on the Persian Gulf.

Koweit.

The family of the present Sheikh have ruled at Koweit for above 300 years. Originally the Sheikh's progenitors dwelt in a small fort, called Moomgussur, situated at the head of the Khor Abdulla, near Bunder Zobeir. They were once the pirates of the north of the Persian Gulf, and were expelled from their former stronghold by the Bussorah authorities. They came down the Bubiyan Creek and settled on the southern shore of the "Bay of Grane," where they built a fort or "kote," whence the name Koweit is derived.

Colonel Pelly's Report of April 1863.

Limits.

The limits of Koweit have never been accurately, or, indeed, even approximately, defined. The claims of the Sheikh extend on the south as far as Musalamiya Bay, but the British Resident was of opinion that they could not be supported, and that this place was clearly within the sphere of Turkish influence.

India Office, May 12, 1902.

On the north they include Safwan, Um Kasr, and Subiya on the mainland, and the islands of Warba and Bubiyan. Much correspondence took place in 1902 in regard to the nature of these claims, owing to a forward move of the Turks, who erected a fort at Um Kasr, and established a military post at Ras-al-Geit on Bubiyan Island.

As regards Safwan, it was considered doubtful whether the Sheikh's claims could be maintained, as they rested upon the shifting allegiance of migratory tribes.

India Office, February 5, 1902.

In a report on Um Kasr, Captain Smyth, who made a special survey of the proposed trace of the Bagdad Railway in 1904, observes that he learned on the spot that the old fort of Um Kasr is generally held to have been built by the grandfather of Sheikh Mubarek, and that it was occasionally occupied during the spring months by Arabs from Koweit. Mr. Wratislaw, His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah, stated that while it was highly desirable to secure control over Um Kasr, the Sheikh had only a very shadowy claim to it, and it had been uninhabited for many years. On the other hand, the Turks seemed to have little claim beyond that of actual occupation.

Sir N. O'Connor, No. 448, June 13, 1904.

"His claim to Bubiyan Island," Mr. Wratislaw continued, "is in my opinion good. For some months every year regularly it is used as a fishing ground by Arabs acknowledging his authority, and by no others."

Sir N. O'Connor, No. 33, Telegraphic, March 16, 1902.

The claim to Subiya was supported by His Majesty's Government, and, with a view to forestalling an apprehended advance of the Turks, it was occupied by the Sheikh of Koweit. It was pointed out by the Government of India that if Subiya were surrendered Kathama Bay would have to follow suit, and the Turks would then threaten Koweit town.

Sir N. O'Connor, No. 10, Telegraphic, March 26, 1902.

Government of India, Telegraphic, March 18, 1902.

Failaka Island, in Koweit Bay, is indisputably within the jurisdiction of the Sheikh; it has been peopled by his subjects, the Avazem tribe, ever since the occupation of Koweit 300 years ago.

India Office, April 9, 1902.

When Colonel Pelly visited Koweit some fifty years ago he described it as "a clean, active town, with a broad and open main bazaar, and numerous solid stone dwelling-houses, containing some 20,000 inhabitants, and attracting Arab and Persian merchants from all quarters by the equity of its rule and by the freedom of its trade. . . . Under the fostering care of a succession of common-sense Rulers, and by means of a policy wisely originated and systematically pursued, an Arab band of pirates now appear as the masters of the thriving port, the refuge of the oppressed, and the peaceful, free home of all."

He recorded the following opinion on the prospects of the port of Koweit:—

"On the whole, and without endeavouring to change trade from any present channel, I would bear Koweit in mind as a convenient point for a telegraph station, for a coal depôt, for the meeting of sea-going and river steamers and other craft, and as a possible future port of importance."

The present importance of Koweit is principally due to its suitability as a

terminus for the Bagdad Railway.* Attention will be directed to this aspect of the question after the political *status* of Koweit and the relations of the Sheikh with His Majesty's Government have been taken into consideration.

In his Report on the tribes around the shores of the Persian Gulf, Colonel Pelly classified Koweit among the "territories nominally recognizing the suzerainty of the Turkish Government, but practically independent under their own Chiefs," and in a later paragraph he emphasizes the nominal character of the suzerainty.

Colonel Pelly wrote as far back as 1863, but his definition of the *status* of Koweit expresses in a nut-shell the attitude His Majesty's Government have consistently adopted on the question.

In July 1897 Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed that—

To Sir P. Currie, No. 307, July 17, 1897.
"Her Majesty's Government have never admitted that Koweit is under the protection of the Turkish Government. But since it is practically under Turkish influence, it is doubtful whether we could deny the latter."

On the 23rd January, 1899, the Sheikh signed an Agreement (to be kept absolutely secret) pledging himself not only to cede no territory, but to receive no foreign Representative without British sanction. In return for this he was promised the good offices of Her Majesty's Government, and a payment was made of 15,000 rupees from the Bushire Treasury.

India Office, September 4, 1899.

The conclusion of the Agreement, however, involved a serious question regarding the property of the Sheikh in Turkish territory. Aliens are by Turkish law precluded from holding landed property, and it was feared that, if the Sheikh were suspected of having agreed to a British Protectorate, the Turkish authorities would attempt to dispossess Mubarek of his property near Fao. The hope was, therefore, held out that the British Government would "do what they could" to protect him and his brothers in the matter.

Inclosure in India Office, February 14, 1899.

In 1901, rumours of Turkish concentration threatening Koweit raised the larger diplomatic question.

1901.

In July 1901 Sir F. Lascelles had had a conversation with Dr. Rosen, of the German Foreign Office, upon the prospects of the Anatolian Railway and the general situation.

An expression used by his Excellency describing the Sheikh as "technically a subject of the Sultan, but enjoying a considerable amount of independence," which on a previous occasion had passed without comment (see Sir F. Lascelles' No. 156 of the 15th June, 1900), now drew from the German Representative an assertion that the Sheikh was "merely a subject of the Sultan."

To Sir P. Lascelles, No. 128, Telegram, August 10, 1901.

It was therefore pointed out to Sir F. Lascelles that the German Government might take advantage of his language to argue that the Sultan could dispose of the territory of the Sheikh. The view that the Sheikh was simply a subject of the Sultan was one that His Majesty's Government were totally unable to accept, and his Excellency was instructed to use language of a more explicit character.

To Sir N. O'Connor, No. 103, Telegram, August 10, 1901.

Sir N. O'Connor was at the same time authorized to state, if occasion arose, that if Koweit were threatened, His Majesty's Government would use force to prevent attack. Important communications now took place at Constantinople and London.

Sir N. O'Connor, Nos. 92 and 93, Telegram, August 21, 1901.

Considerable pressure was being exercised on the Ottoman Government by the German and Russian Embassies, and, though a proposal of the Vali of Bussorah to use force against the Sheikh had been rejected by the Council of Ministers, Tewfik Pasha informed Sir N. O'Connor that Koweit was regarded as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire. A warning given by the Commander of the "Perseus" to the Captain of a Turkish corvette off Koweit that no troops would be permitted to land was largely magnified in transmission, and occasioned further protests.

Sir N. O'Connor, No. 102, Telegram, August 29, 1901.

Tewfik Pasha inquired on the 29th August whether His Majesty's Government intended to establish a Protectorate, and on the same day the German Embassy in London received a pressing instruction to state that a British Protectorate would be contrary to the Treaty of Berlin, and that, in view of her interest in Koweit as the future terminus of the Anatolian Railway, Germany would be compelled to regard such a proceeding as an unfriendly act. The reply in each case was that His

* See also p. 141 respecting Khor Musa in Persia.

Majesty's Government had no such intention, Sir N. O'Connor adding the reservation "provided that Turkey did not force our hands by interfering with the Sheikh."

1901.
To Sir F. Lascelles, No. 306, August 29, 1901.

Subsequently, the German Ambassador called to say "that if by threats of force His Majesty's Government prevented the Sultan from landing troops at Koweit, they were refusing to recognize the Sultan's authority with which they had stated (in a Memorandum communicated by the King to the German Emperor) that they did not desire to interfere in those parts, and that the German Government considered that Koweit formed unquestionably part of the territories belonging to the Sultan."

Telegrams were also communicated by the Turkish Ambassador protesting against the reported intention to declare a British Protectorate and describing the Convention of 1899 (the terms of which had leaked out) as without validity, but the Sultan had meanwhile been advised by the German Government to be satisfied with the assurances given to Count Metternich, and to ask for their repetition.

On the 6th September, 1901, Sir N. O'Connor was sent for by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The assurances given by his Excellency on this occasion were considered by the Ottoman Government "of a nature to terminate the present controversy," and Anthopoulos Pasha was instructed to ask for their confirmation.

The following note was accordingly addressed to him:—

"The Marquess of Lansdowne to Anthopoulos Pasha.

"Your Excellency,

"Foreign Office, September 11, 1901.

"I HAVE taken note with satisfaction of the telegram from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, communicated by you on the 9th instant, in which his Excellency states that the Turkish Government will not send troops to Koweit, and will maintain the *status quo* there, on condition that His Majesty's Government will abstain from occupying that place or establishing a British Protectorate there.

"I have pleasure in confirming the assurance which has been given to his Excellency by His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople that, provided the Turkish Government abstain from sending troops to Koweit and respect the *status quo* there, His Majesty's Government will not occupy that place or establish a British Protectorate over it.

"I am, &c.
(Signed) "LANSDOWNE."

In a Secret telegram dated the 7th September, 1901, Lord Lansdowne, while pointing out that "the situation requires very careful handling as our arrangement with the Sheikh is not very precise, and it was entered into without the knowledge or concurrence of the Porte," instructed Sir N. O'Connor that "we cannot recede from our position, and if the Porte should insist on raising the question of their rights we may have to convert into something much more precise the present indefinite understanding with the Sheikh."

In view, however, of the assurances recorded in the note quoted above, his Excellency did not communicate these instructions during 1901, and the controversy rested for the moment on the basis of a mutual maintenance of the *status quo*. The Turkish Ambassador expressed himself well satisfied with this state of affairs (October 1), and on the same day Sir N. O'Connor was assured by the Minister for Foreign Affairs "most positively that the Imperial Government had no intention whatsoever of occupying or attacking Koweit." An understanding was arrived at that the two Governments were to co-operate in maintaining the peace, Turkey endeavouring to restrain the Amir of Nejd, while His Majesty's Government would do what they could to discourage the Sheikh from aggressive action, and Mubarek was told that the good offices of His Majesty's Government would be extended to him only if he followed their advice.

On the 9th September, 1901, a further communication was made to Count Metternich. A Memorandum upon various subjects, including Koweit, drawn up by Lord Lansdowne for the King's personal use, and handed by His Majesty to the German Emperor at a recent meeting, had elicited a formal reply from the German Government which Count Metternich had lately left at the Foreign Office.

To Sir F. Lascelles, Nos. 304 and 312, September 11 and 12, 1901.

It was now explained to his Excellency that the Memorandum, which had been hastily prepared, was a purely informal and unofficial document. The statement which it contained respecting Koweit was a repetition of Sir N. O'Connor's language in 1900, which was to the effect that Her Majesty's Government had no desire to interfere with the Sultan's authority *as it exists* in those parts. There could be no doubt that this authority was of a very limited description. The Sheikh belonged to a class of native Chiefs enjoying a large measure of practical independence with whom His

1901. Majesty's Government found it necessary to have direct relations for the sake of the maintenance of tranquillity and the protection of British trade. Therefore, although ready to maintain the *status quo*, His Majesty's Government had been unable to acquiesce in attempts recently made by Turkey to impose on the Sheikh conditions from which he had hitherto been free. They had considered it a matter for direct and friendly discussion with the Porte, who now regarded the incident as closed, and Count Metternich was informed of the assurances exchanged.

To Sir F. Lascelles, No. 321, September 28, 1901.

Lord Lansdowne subsequently said to Count Metternich that it was necessary to bear in mind that where minor Eastern States were concerned it was not unusual to find that they owed a divided allegiance to more than one Power.

The German Memorandum states that Koweit has an importance for Germany merely as the proposed terminus of the Bagdad Railway, and gives an undertaking that the Manager of the Railway Company will be instructed to come to an understanding with the British Government when the time for purchasing land for a railway terminus and a landing-place at Koweit shall have come. Count Metternich afterwards confirmed this assurance in conversation with Lord Lansdowne, adding that the railway might be made five years or fifty years hence, or not at all, but that when it was made it was important for Germany to find a peaceful condition of things in that part of the Gulf.

In consequence of a threatened attack by the Emir of Nejd and Turkish troops upon Koweit, the Commander of His Majesty's ship "Pomone," at the request of the Sheikh, landed guns for the fort at Jehara, and made arrangements for the defence of the town. Instructions were given to him to desist from these preparations as soon as Koweit was no longer threatened. Representations on the subject were made by the Turkish Ambassador, who demanded the re-embarkation of the guns and the restoration of the *status quo*. He was informed, in reply, that His Majesty's Government considered their proceedings to be justified so long as danger of attack existed; and subsequently he was told that the guns had been re-embarked.

Early in 1902 the Turks departed from their engagements to maintain the *status quo*, and occupied posts at Um Kasr and Ras-al-Geit, the latter on Bubiyan Island, which is a place of strategic importance, as commanding the approaches to the Khor Abdulla. The Sheikh of Koweit regarded this as a disturbance of the *status quo*, and put forward claims of territorial jurisdiction to both places; and British war-ships were ordered to Koweit in January.

The Government of India took a very serious view of the Turkish action which, it was surmised, was inspired by Germany. They pointed out that with the shores of the mainland and of Bubiyan Island in the hands of a single Power, the anchorages below Um Kasr* could at any time be converted into an impregnable harbour.

Sir N. O'Connor made repeated representations to the Ottoman Government, but they proved entirely futile in their effect, in so far as the withdrawal of the post on Bubiyan was concerned. As regards Um Kasr and Bubiyan Island, Sir N. O'Connor informed the Porte that the Turkish occupation could not be regarded as in any way prejudicing the Sheikh's rights and authority over them. He intimated that, if the Ottoman Government proceeded to bring matters to a crisis, he would advise his Government not to allow further encroachment, and, if necessary, to prevent it by force.

The Turkish advance to Subiya was arrested, probably owing to the presence of British war-ships.

In October 1902, the Government of India reported a request made by Sheikh Mubarak for the gift of two or three guns, presumably to be placed at Jehara for the protection of Koweit against land attack. They proposed to give a refusal, but to intimate to him that His Majesty's Government undertook to defend the Koweit district, provided he complied with the injunction already conveyed to him to observe his engagement to His Majesty's Government, and to follow their advice. Lord Lansdowne concurred in the proposed reply, on the understanding that the "Koweit district" should be clearly defined as the district adjoining or close to the bay of that name. A telegram to this effect was accordingly sent to the Government of India.

* It has been suggested that the importance of Um Kasr and Warba Roads is minimized, because the approaches through the Khor Abdulla are becoming silted up. But this appears to rest merely on hearsay and inexact information.

In reference to an Arab raid from Nejd, made with the cognizance of the Vali of Bussorah, pressure was brought upon the Porte to caution the Vali, and a warning given that His Majesty's Government would not allow an attack upon Koweit.

The importance of securing the withdrawal of the Turkish post from Ras-al-Geit, and of asserting the Sheikh's claim to Bubiyan, and if possible to Warba, was emphasized by an Inter-Departmental Committee in October 1907.

After entirely concurring in the views of the Government of India, the Committee continued:—

"We therefore recommend, if diplomatic considerations permit, that the Sheikh of Koweit should be invited to specify the nature of his claims to Warba Island, to which he is understood frequently to have referred; and that the continued occupation of Bubiyan Island by a Turkish post, in derogation of the Sheikh's territorial claims (which have been recognized and supported by His Majesty's Government), should be neutralized by the establishment forthwith of a Koweiti post, with the countenance of His Majesty's Government, on Warba Island, or, if that should prove undesirable, on the northern shore of Bubiyan Island. If practicable, we would even recommend the establishment of posts on both islands.

"We desire to emphasize the importance which we attach to the effective assertion of the Sheikh's territorial claims to Bubiyan."

The Admiralty concurred in these recommendations, and Sir E. Grey was of opinion that, while it would be desirable to assert any rights which the Sheikh might possess in respect of Warba Island, his jurisdiction over Bubiyan should be resolutely supported by His Majesty's Government on the grounds so forcibly stated by the Government of India.

It was decided, in the first instance, to ascertain the nature of the Sheikh's claim to Warba, and this is now being done.

On the 15th October, 1907, a Secret Agreement was signed with the Sheikh of Koweit, granting to His Majesty's Government, for a yearly rental of 4,000*l.*, a perpetual lease of a portion of the foreshore at Bunder Shweikh (near Koweit), which is held, on topographical and hydrographical considerations, to possess greater capabilities as a railway terminus than any other place on the Persian Gulf. The Agreement includes rights of pre-emption in regard to Ras Kathama, Warba, and any territory over which the Sheikh may exercise jurisdiction.

This Agreement, and the appointment in 1903 of a British Political Agent to reside at Koweit, have done much to strengthen our position.

Further measures which may be considered advisable are the construction of a lighthouse on Failaka Island or on Kubbar Island (which is considered necessary for navigation purposes) and the erection of a wireless telegraphic apparatus, as proposed at Musandim, Bassidu, and Bahrein, for the more effective suppression of piracy, and as a signal station for passing ships.

It might also be of service to trade if a bank were opened at Koweit.

It should be observed that a delicate point in our relations with the Sheikh is the extent to which we can ignore the traffic in arms which nominally he has prohibited.

(g.) *Mohammerah.*

The town of Mohammerah is situated on the right bank of the Karun River, about a mile above the point where it flows into the Shat-el-Arab. The British India Steam Navigation Company's steamers call weekly, lying at the confluence of the Karun with the Shat-el-Arab. There is considerable communication between Mohammerah and the interior of Persia, while a regular service of steamers is maintained with Ahwaz.

Both Turkey and Persia have raised claims to the ownership of the town and surrounding territory of Mohammerah. The subject is exhaustively dealt with in a Memorandum, dated December 1906, on the Turco-Persian frontier. Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah is the acknowledged Head of a number of Arab tribes on the Karun and Shat-el-Arab. He has considerable armed forces, and as regards the Persian Government, occupies the position of a semi-independent feudal Prince. He also exercises authority over certain Arab tribes in Turkey.

Sheikh Khazal has in recent years undertaken the policing of the Karun in a more effective manner, mainly with a view to secure British good-will.

India Office,
April 26,
1904.

In 1904 Major Burton, who acted as British Vice-Consul at Mohammerah, recommended that an Arrangement should be made with the Sheikh, guaranteeing him against the Persian Government. He stated that the Sheikh had extended his power in a very marked manner, and that his territory apparently stretched along the coast as far as Shah Abdul Shah, a few miles west of Dilani, whilst there were few signs of Persian authority south of Band-i-kir to the border of Fars. The Governors of Ahwaz and Mashur were nominated by him; he had done much for the suppression of piracy on the Shat-el-Arab and the safety of the roads and the Karun River in Arabistan; while, if encouraged, he would do more to please the British Government, and might effectively block foreign schemes of irrigation within the limits of his jurisdiction.

This proposal, though at first sight inviting, would prove difficult, if not impossible, in execution, on account of the admissions as to Persian sovereignty made by His Majesty's Government in the course of the negotiations respecting the Turco-Persian frontier.

In 1902 Sheikh Khazal, who for upwards of sixty years had farmed the customs of Mohammerah, entered, with some reluctance, into an Arrangement with the Persian Government to place the administration of the customs under the Belgian Customs officials. At the same time, he pressed His Majesty's Government for an assurance of support in the event of the Persian Government breaking their engagements towards him. While expressing himself able to deal with the Persians, he feared an attempt to coerce him might be made by some other Power, either acting alone or in co-operation with the Shah's Government. His Majesty's Government undertook to protect Mohammerah against naval attack by a foreign Power under any pretext, and also, so long as the Sheikh remained faithful to the Shah and followed British advice, to continue to give him good offices and support.

At a meeting held on the 22nd March, 1905, the Imperial Defence Committee decided:—

"That it is important to secure the good offices of the Sheikh of Mohammerah, and the possibility of supporting him in certain cases against the Shah should not be excluded; but we must be the judges of the merits of any dispute which may arise."

Mr. Mar-
ling No. 18,
Com-
mercial,
December
21, 1907

In December 1907, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran reported that Messrs. Wönekhaus, the German firm, had leased a plot of land on the river bank at Mohammerah for a period of eight years.

(h.) *Persia.*

Most of the authoritative statements on the protection of our interests in Southern Persia and the Gulf have been rendered largely irrelevant by the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention; while another factor, of perhaps corresponding import, is the rise of German influence at Tehran—too recent to admit any definition of its ultimate effect.

In these circumstances, it is peculiarly hard to write upon the situation as it is affected on the Persian littoral of the Gulf; existing information is largely beside the point; the future trend of events is remarkably obscured.

It has accordingly seemed advisable, in considering here the Persian question in relation to the Gulf, to avoid larger and indefinite issues, and to direct attention exclusively, and that only on general lines, to (a) a description of the coast-line, and (b) the development of trade routes and railway communication.

The first subject could obviously not be omitted in a Memorandum of this character; the second is suggested by the declaration of the German Government, that their interest in Persia is purely commercial. Without seeking to impugn the sincerity of this limitation, it may be doubted whether, at the present day, a distinct line can be drawn between political and commercial relations, the more so since in other quarters German policy has shown such conspicuous success in using the leverage of commercial enterprise for the promotion of political ascendancy.

It has been justly said that Persia governs her coast on sufferance. Proverbially timorous of the sea, and possessed of a single vessel of war—the "Persepolis"—under foreign command and at present unseaworthy, the Persians owe their authority, such as it is, to the past exertions and actual presence of British naval officers, who have rendered navigation secure, and thus contributed in no small degree

to the revenue of the Persian exchequer. To show that this statement is not overdrawn, it may be recalled that there is not a single really Persian village or town from Mohammerah, on the Shat-el-Arab, to Gwadar, on the Baluchistan border. Excepting Bushire, every town, village, and island is inhabited by Arabs, with a very small sprinkling of Persian blood among them, over whom the Persian Government would be incapable of asserting authority should any concerted rising take place. Only a few years ago there was a temporary overthrow of Persian authority at Lingah; the Sheikh of Kishm would like to declare his independence; and for some time it was an open question whether the Arabs of Mohammerah would submit to the extension of the new customs régime to that port. Within the past six months there have been serious disturbances at Lingah and Bunder Abbas, and British naval action has been taken against pirates at Dayir on the Persian coast.

The most striking feature of the Persian coast is the absence of good harbours. Bushire, Lingah, and Bunder Abbas are merely open roadsteads, where a landing can sometimes be effected only with difficulty, and for days it may be impossible to work cargo. At Bushire cargo can indeed be brought alongside the customs-house in almost any weather, provided the lighters can approach the steamers, which remain at over 2 miles from the shore. The position could be immeasurably improved by dredging. At Bunder Abbas a good harbour could be constructed by utilizing the deep water of the Clarence Straits, which separate the Island of Kishm from the mainland.

The importance of Bunder Abbas, with the adjacent Islands of Kishm, Henjam, and Hormuz, as a naval station, was the subject of much official correspondence between 1900 and 1905, and was emphasized by an Inter-Departmental Committee which met in October 1907.

A point of the Persian coast which calls for special mention on account of its suitability as a terminus for the Bagdad Railway is Khor Musa, near the Shat-el-Arab. Admiralty, August 7, 1903.

This Khor was surveyed by two British naval officers in 1903.

Turning now to the subject of trade routes and the development of railway communication, the ports which command caravan routes are Bunder Abbas, Bushire, and Mohammerah, while Bussorah, in Turkish territory, is a principal artery for trade in transit to Persia via Bagdad and Kermanshah.

The Bunder Abbas roads to Kerman and Yazd are very insecure on account of brigands, and the road from Bushire to Shiraz is arduous and difficult. The transport rates are subject to great fluctuation; but, striking an average, Mr. Whigham, in his book "The Persian Problem," points out that whereas it costs 30s. a ton to carry goods from London to Bushire, the transport thence to Shiraz (183 miles) costs 87s., and the charge from Bushire to Ispahan may be estimated at 10l.

The Ahwaz-Ispahan road, constructed for the Bakhtiari Khans by Messrs. Lynch, has brought Ispahan within much closer proximity to the sea, and, in point of distance, is a great improvement on the Bushire-Shiraz-Ispahan route.

The opening of roads is indeed desirable in order to feed the trade of the Gulf; but it has been forcibly urged that no marked development of commerce can take place until railway construction has been entered upon, and that a single line joining Bunder Abbas or Bushire with the plateau would be of incalculable service in this connection, since it would reduce the time of the journey from the coast to Ispahan from thirty days to twenty-four hours, and the cost of transport from 10l. a ton to 1l.

Moreover, it is by no means improbable—the German Minister for Foreign Affairs alluded to the contingency in conversation with Sir E. Grey—that the promoters of the Bagdad Railway may seek to secure an extension across the Turkish frontier, and the situation which now causes anxiety to His Majesty's Government in Mesopotamia may perhaps find a counterpart in the south of Persia. That such a consummation would be prejudicial to our interests does not appear to require demonstration; and a Concession of this nature should assuredly be forestalled by the acquisition of prior rights, to which, in virtue of undertakings of the late Shah* and his predecessor, His Majesty's Government are already in some degree entitled.

The most natural route for a railway would perhaps be the prolongation of the Khanikin branch from Bagdad via Kermanshah, Sultanabad, and Ispahan to Yazd, with branches to Dizful and Mohammerah and to Kerman and Bunder Abbas. The provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention would occasion some deviation from this line, but the trunk line could be modified to meet the exigencies of the political

* See Appendix (B), p. 168.

situation, while a beginning would necessarily be made with the branches which rest on the sea.

For the present, questions of actual construction are premature; it is only desirable, in order to guard against a needless surrender to German competition, to enter a caveat at Tehran.

The following letter, dated the 25th September, 1907, contains the views of Sir E. Grey on the subject of railway construction:—

"I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to state, for the information of the Secretary of State for India, that he has recently had under consideration the effect which the signature of the Anglo-Russian Convention is likely to exercise, sooner or later, upon the question of railway construction in Persia.

"As you are aware, the Convention provides that neither of the Contracting Powers shall, without previous arrangement between them, oppose the grant of Concessions supported by the other within the limits of the neutral zone, where equality of commercial opportunity is likewise recognized to the subjects of third Powers.

"It may, indeed, safely be surmised that other Powers will not be slow to appreciate the changed situation, and to seek to turn it to advantage.

"Although the Russo-Persian Railway Convention has still some years to run, the question of future railway construction in Persia, and the pledges made to His Majesty's Government by the two late Shahs must not be lost sight of, and a timely decision should be taken as to what Concessions it would be most conducive to the interests of British policy to obtain for railway construction in Southern Persia.

"In these circumstances, it seems advisable that His Majesty's Government should take into early consideration the question of a possible attempt to extend the Bagdad Railway into Southern Persia, with a view to determining whether a Concession of this nature to other Powers should be opposed, or whether it should be forestalled by timely action on the part of His Majesty's Government, who, by securing prior rights of construction, might render an extension of the Bagdad Railway under foreign auspices economically undesirable.

"Sir E. Grey is unwilling that the history of the Bagdad Railway Concession, which at one time could have been secured to British enterprise, should find a counterpart in Persia. Moreover, the extension of the Bagdad Railway, as a *foreign undertaking*, in the direction of the Indian frontier, would, on strategic grounds, appear to be inadmissible; the grant of such a Concession would compel the opposition of His Majesty's Government, and a sharp diplomatic conflict would ensue, whereas by the exercise of foresight such a crisis might be averted altogether.

"Turning now to the question of what specific action His Majesty's Government should take to the end in view, it appears to Sir E. Grey that a British Concession for a railway from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz might prove financially advantageous, while it would seem to offer no strategic objections from the point of view of the defence of India. Such a line would absorb all the traffic which has hitherto passed from Bushire and Ahwaz to the north of Persia, and would result in the material improvement of the port of Bunder Abbas, now in the British sphere, and greatly increase its value and importance. The Concession might include the right to continue the line to Ahwaz or elsewhere in Arabistan, and to effect a junction with the Bagdad Railway—such extension to be left to the discretion of the concessionnaire.

"An alternative scheme, which deserves examination, is whether it would be either desirable or practicable to unite the Indian railway system with the Bagdad Railway.

"This scheme raises strategic considerations which fall within the province of the Government of India and the Committee of Imperial Defence.

"It may well be thought expedient, for strategic reasons, to oppose altogether the progress of railway construction towards the Indian frontier. Be this as it may, it would appear that the difficulty of meeting German competition in the neutral zone in Persia is likely to increase from year to year, and it may prove that a railway such as that referred to would, in British hands, be the most effective means of anticipating a German commercial advance into Southern Persia in the future, thus becoming the source of protection rather than of weakness in the defence of India.

"As to the economic aspects of the scheme, it may be regarded as likely that the existence of such a line would make British co-operation in the Bagdad Railway more welcome to the Germans, since it would increase the volume of through traffic. While passengers would hesitate to travel by the Bagdad Railway with the necessity

of breaking the journey on arrival at the Persian Gulf, the convenience of a through carriage from Calais to India could not fail to make itself felt; further, the economy of time would be considerable, and of especial value in the transmission of mails.

"The objections of the Russian Government might be such as to render the enterprise inadvisable, though these objections could not fairly extend to the British 'sphere' of influence; but, in Sir E. Grey's opinion, there is no reason to believe that they would prove insurmountable if on mature consideration the enterprise should be deemed advantageous.

"Sir E. Grey is of opinion that the whole question should be submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defence, in order that His Majesty's Government may be in a position to decide upon a definite line of policy. . . .

"The subject of British participation in the Bagdad Railway may possibly be raised on the occasion of the approaching visit of the German Emperor to this country; and, both on this account and for the reasons already explained, it is desirable that a decision on the questions raised should not be unduly delayed."

(i.) Bassidu.

Bassidu is situated at the western extremity of Kishm Island, which lies parallel to the Persian Coast, from which it is separated by Clarence Strait.

It has a good anchorage, for vessels of moderate draught, about a third of a mile off shore. For landing purposes there is a low stone pier, about 80 yards in length, extending to low-water mark.

It was once a flourishing Portuguese Settlement, and the ruins of the old town are still in existence.

The British occupation appears to have begun in 1820, under a verbal grant from Sultan Syed Saeed of Muscat, who then exercised jurisdiction over the island. This was confirmed by Agreement with his son and successor, Sultan Thoweymee, in 1864. In spite of the fact that Kishm had been taken in 1852 by Persia, and leased in 1855 to Muscat, the Persian Government took no exception to the British occupation of Bassidu, either when they leased Kishm to Muscat in 1845 [? 1855], when the lease was renewed in 1868, or when it was forcibly terminated in the latter year.

The Government of India, in their despatch No. 66 of the 2nd May, 1901, state:—

NOTE.—The India Office letters of the 30th October, 1901 and the 7th January, 1902, deal with the limits of British jurisdiction at Bassidu. The India Office letter of the 10th July, 1901, deals with British Government buildings. The Admiralty letter of the 21st March, 1902, incloses a report on the Islands of Kishm and Hormuz.

"We already possess a plot of British territory at Bassidu on Kishm Island. . . . Your Lordship is aware of the conditions under which we hold possession of Bassidu. Though we no longer use the place as a coaling depôt, we keep an agent there, who flies the British flag. . . . There are no independent local Chiefs with whom we could enter into relations. With the exception of the tract in our possession at Bassidu the islands are under Persian authority."

Again, the Government of India wrote, in their despatch No. 92 of the 29th May, 1902:—

"The circumstances connected with the British occupation of Bassidu are already known to your Lordship. The settlement dates from 1820; but our occupation has for many years been indicated only by the presence of a native coal agent, who, however, has habitually flown the British flag."

The place was for many years (from 1823 till 1879) the head-quarters of the Indian Marine; and it is one of the healthiest places near the entrance to the Gulf.

On the 6th May, 1903, the India Office stated that the Russian Consul at Bushire had made inquiries as to the nature of the British position at Bassidu, and had been informed of the situation by the French Agent at Lingah.

In the Admiralty letter of the 21st March, 1902, a report is inclosed from Rear-Admiral Bosanquet, in which he says:—

"Kishm is, in my opinion, the most important strategical position in the Persian Gulf, from a naval point of view, and its possession would be very important to us as a port for our mercantile marine and a coaling station for our ships of war."

On the 19th November, 1902, a Conference, consisting of delegates of the Foreign Office, India Office, War Office, and Admiralty, was held at the Foreign Office, and amongst other recommendations as to the methods in which the extension of British influence could be most successfully prosecuted, and to the best advantage for general purposes, it was advised that "we should reassert our claims at Bassidu."

It does not appear that any very definite action has been taken in pursuance of this recommendation, though it is recorded in the Minutes of the Committee of Imperial Defence.

An Inter-Departmental Committee of delegates from the Foreign Office, India Office, and Admiralty, in submitting a report (dated October 1907) on the terminus of the Bagdad Railway, recommended incidentally that such steps as His Majesty's Government might consider feasible should be taken to consolidate our position at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, including Kishm.

It has been suggested that the ruined buildings at Bassidu should be pulled down, and a small meteorological station under a British-Indian subject established. A depot for stores for the ships-of-war in the Gulf might also be created, and it is worth considering whether a wireless telegraphic apparatus should not be installed for convenience of communication.

(j.) *The Islands of Abu Musa, Tamb, and Sirri.*

Abu Musa and Tamb.

In January 1903 Colonel Kembell, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, reported that, in consequence of the short-sighted policy of the Belgian Customs officials, trade had to a large extent been diverted from the Persian port of Lingah, and local merchants were endeavouring to arrange with the Bombay and Persian Navigation Company to make the Island of Abu Musa a port of call, apparently for the purpose of facilitating their pearl business.

Colonel Kembell was apprehensive lest such a conjuncture should result in a territorial claim to this island being advanced by the Persian Government who, in 1888, had laid claim to and hoisted their flag on the adjacent Island of Sirri.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that, writing on the 28th April, 1888, Colonel Ross, then British Resident, had expressed a decided opinion that no valid claim to Abu Musa could be advanced by the Persian Government, while any attempt to assert their authority in a practical form would probably lead to disturbances.

Colonel Kembell stated that the island undoubtedly belonged to the Jowasmi Sheikh of Shargah (one of the Trucial Chiefs under British protection). In the winter it was usually visited by people from Khan and Shargah for purposes of fishing and grazing. In the pearling season these people were in the habit of migrating, and the sole inhabitants remaining were three men whose duty was to tend the date trees belonging to Sheikh Salem, the uncle of the Sheikh of Shargah.

The Jowasmi did not fly a flag on the island, and Colonel Kembell submitted that it might be well to advise the Sheikh of Shargah to do so as a sign of ownership.

This course was approved by the Government of India, and on the 30th April, 1903, Colonel Kembell reported that the Sheikh had issued orders accordingly.

The Government of India at the same time instructed the Resident to furnish his observations on the expediency of advising the Sheikh of Ras-el-Kheimah to adopt a similar course in regard to the Island of Tamb, which apparently belonged to that section of the Jowasmi.

(In 1888, on the occupation of Sirri, the Sheikh of Shargah had urged that the Persians should be prevented from pursuing a similar course at Tamb.)

Colonel Kembell replied that the Persian Government had never asserted sovereignty over the island; that the Sheikh of Shargah, in his existing capacity as Ruler of Ras-el-Kheimah, claimed it as an appanage of the Jowasmi of the Arab Coast, urging that it was visited by his subjects on account of the good water supply and for purposes of grazing; that the Sheikh was in possession of documentary evidence, in the shape of three letters from two Arab Sheikhs of Lingah, admitting the claim of the Jowasmi of the Arab Coast as against that of the Jowasmi of Lingah; and, finally, that in one of these letters, written in 1877, the Sheikh of Lingah had conceded that the Persians had no property there, nor any right of interference, save with the consent of the Chief of Ras-el-Kheimah.

India Office,
July 23,
1903.

Foreign
Office
Memoran-
dum of
July 30,
1903.

Inlosure in
Colonel
Ross to
Tehran of
August 19,
1888 (see
Govern-
ment of

The Government of India hereupon directed that the Chief of Shargah should be advised, as in the case of Abu Musa, to hoist his flag on the Island of Tamb.

In April 1904 the Viceroy of India telegraphed that the Belgian officials in charge of the Persian Customs had placed guards on Abu Musa and Tamb, forcibly removed the Arab flags, erected new flagstuffs, and hoisted the Persian flag in both islands.

The Sheikh of Shargah, on hearing of this encroachment, declared that he could not tolerate the action of the Persian authorities, and, in virtue of Treaty relations, appealed to His Majesty's Government to take the necessary steps with a view to preventing such interference with his territory.

Major Cox, the British Resident, in commenting subsequently on the irresponsible action of the Customs officials on this occasion, wrote as follows:—

"I would observe, in conclusion, that signs are not wanting to my mind to incline me to the belief that if we do not maintain a vigorous policy in connection with these islands in the Gulf, it will not be long before we are confronted with difficulties in regard to the adjacent pearl fisheries, the preservation of which under the time-honoured conditions has always been one of the fundamental features of our policy in these waters."

The Government of India took a serious view of the incident, and proposed to dispatch a gun-boat to the islands, with a representative of the Sheikh of Shargah on board, to haul down the Persian flag, reinstate the Jowasmi flag, and remove the guards to Persian territory.

It was decided, however, in the first instance to make representations to the Persian Government, and on the 24th May His Majesty's Minister reported that they had telegraphed orders to Bushire to remove the flags and guards from Abu Musa and Tamb, while reserving their right to discuss with His Majesty's Government the respective claims to the island.

The following is the text of a note addressed by His Majesty's Minister to the Persian Government on the 15th June, 1904:—

"Your Excellency,

"I have had the honour to receive your note of yesterday's date respecting Tamb and Abu Musa, and shall be happy to transmit to the Government of India any proofs with which you may favour me that the claims of the Persian Government to the ownership of these islands outweigh those of the Sheikh of Shargah.

"Your Excellency must, however, understand that I cannot agree to the suggestion, of which I hear for the first time, that this Trucial Chief should not be permitted to replace his flag pulled down by the Persian Customs officials, and I would remind you in this connection that we have not insisted upon the Persian Government removing their flag from the Island of Sirri till the controversy between the two Governments as to the ownership of the island, which originated many years ago, has been reciprocally settled. The position would have been different if the Sheikh of Shargah had removed an existing Persian flag from Tamb and Abu Musa. What he did was to hoist his own flag upon the islands, which were not yet formally occupied by any other Government, and he has the right to fly it as the first occupant, till his lawful possession of these islands is disproved."

In June 1904 Major Cox entered into communication with the Chief of Shargah, as Head Sheikh of the Jowasmi, respecting the rehoisting of the Jowasmi flags.

Flagstuffs were erected on both islands and guards stationed there, and the Chiefs and inhabitants of the Pirate Coast were glad, and felt assured that the British Government would protect them against enemies and would maintain their honour, and the people highly praised the British Government.

M. Naus, the Belgian Director of Customs, informed Sir A. Hardinge, in May 1904, that the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs had told him that the Persian claim to Tamb and Sirri was sound, but that to Abu Musa was more doubtful. No further Persian claim to Tamb and Abu Musa has been reported since 1904.

Sirri.

In June 1904 the Government of India instructed the Resident in the Persian Gulf to forward a report on the actual situation at Sirri, which the Persian Government had occupied in 1888, as it might be convenient to reopen the question of the legality of the Persian occupation if the Persian Government should afford an opportunity by questioning the status of Abu Musa and Tamb.

India Pro-
ceedings,
September
1888).

India Office,
April 14,
1904.

India Office,
May 4,
1904.

India Office,
August 19,
1904.

Sir A.
Hardinge,
No. 61, Tele-
graphic,
May 24,
1904.

Sir A.
Hardinge,
No. 164,
June 15,
1904.

India Office,
September
20, 1904.

Sir A.
Hardinge,
No. 91,
May 24,
1904.

India Office,
August 19,
1904.

Sir A.
Hardinge,
No. 135,
July 23,
1904.

Major Cox reported that His Majesty's Government had never in any way admitted, or withdrawn their original objections to, the claim of the Shah's Government to the ownership of the island; while it was equally clear from the records of the Residency that the Jowasmi Arab Sheikhs of the Pirate Coast had never voluntarily dropped their claim to proprietary rights over Sirri any more than over Abu Musa and Tamb. As late as 1895 the said Sheikhs had declared that, although the Chief of Shargah on their behalf had duly represented to the British Government that the ownership of the island was vested in him, as Chief of the Jowasmi, the British Government had refrained from moving in the matter, and that they themselves had consequently been unable to enforce their rights by their own unaided efforts.

A full précis of the correspondence relating to the occupation of Sirri is contained in a letter, dated Bushire, the 19th August, 1888, from Colonel Ross to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran (*vide* Government of India Proceedings, September 1888, No. 104).

(*Vide
supra.*)

Sir Arthur Hardinge, in commenting on the correspondence between Major Cox and the Government of India, deprecated raising the case of Sirri, unless the Persian Government forced the question upon His Majesty's Government, since the latter were face to face with an occupation in which they had acquiesced for very many years, though they had not formally recognized it.

He added that M. Naus had consented to strike out Sirri from the list of Customs ports enumerated in the "Règlement Douanier."

PART III.—COMMERCE.

(a.) *The Pearl Fisheries.*

The pearl fisheries constitute so important a factor in the general policy of His Majesty's Government in the Persian Gulf, that considerable space is allotted to the consideration of this subject, and the three principal papers which bear upon it are quoted *in extenso*. These are—

- (I.) A despatch from the Government of India dated the 10th March, 1904;
- (II.) A Report submitted by the Law Officers of the Crown to Lord Lansdowne, dated the 11th February, 1905; and
- (III.) A despatch to the Viceroy from the Secretary of State for India, dated the 31st March, 1905.

I.

"In the course of our recent examination of problems connected with the Persian Gulf, the question of the pearl fisheries that have so long existed there has come under our notice. Important questions, both of policy and international law, are involved; and although none of these has fortunately hitherto assumed an acute shape, it seems to us desirable that the matter should be considered now, in order that we may know how to act should any sudden or unexpected development occur. We therefore address you on the subject.

"The approximate limits of the pearling grounds in the neighbourhood of the Arab littoral are indicated on the inclosed copy of a chart of the Gulf. In addition to those marked, there are also shoals in the neighbourhood of Kharak Island, and at other points along the Persian coast, which are regularly exploited, and frequently yield considerable returns. We are immediately concerned, however, only with those lying on the Arabian side of the Gulf. Along this coast lie the territories of the several Trucial Chiefs, the Peninsula of El Katr, the Island of Bahrein, the Turkish Province of El Hassa, and the domains of the Sheikh of Koweit. The pearl banks appear from time immemorial to have been open, without distinction, to the Arabs of the entire littoral; and though there are no definite inter-tribal limits, the external boundaries of the fisheries are well known. Intrusion is resented; the principal Chiefs have in the past expressed the view that the fisheries are common property, and that no Chief has therefore the right to grant any Concession to outside parties; and, believing as they do that the shallower waters are dependent

on the deeper for their supply of shells, their objections relate not only to interference on the shoals which are habitually fished by their dependents, but also to the exploitation of the deeper waters beyond.

"His Majesty's Government are aware of the close relations which exist between the Arabs of this coast and the Indian Government. Since 1843 we have held from the Trucial Chiefs agreements to refrain from any breach of the peace at sea, and in 1892 the Sheikhs concluded fresh compacts, binding themselves not to enter into any Agreement or correspondence with any Power other than the British Government; not to consent, except with the permission of the British Government, to the residence within their territories of the Agent of any other State; and not to cede, sell, mortgage, or otherwise give occupation of any portion of their territories, save to the British Government. In respect of El Katr, we have at present no formal Conventions. We have declined, however, to recognize Turkish pretensions on the peninsula, and the leading Chief has on more than one occasion approached our officers in the Gulf with a request that he may be admitted to closer relations with the Indian Government. Bahrein has for long been, to all intents and purposes, a British Protectorate; while, in the case of Koweit, though the Turks have laid claim to certain ill-defined rights of sovereignty, we have always asserted that the Sheikh enjoys a large measure of practical independence, and His Majesty's Government have promised him their good offices. The maintenance of the maritime peace in the Gulf is an object which, for more than a century past, we have steadily kept in view in all our dealings with the Arab tribes. To secure this object we have prohibited the use of armed boats by the Chiefs, and have taken upon ourselves the duty of policing all these waters. A necessary corollary of this policy is that the Chiefs cannot themselves adopt forcible measures for the preservation of their monopoly in connection with the pearl fisheries. It is clear, therefore, that we on our part owe to them an obligation to defend their rights so far as they can reasonably be substantiated. This duty carries with it incidentally the advantage that, if our right to police the pearl banks is recognized, a large area of the Gulf becomes at once practically British waters.

"In the past we have on more than one occasion intervened to prevent the intrusion of foreigners. In 1863 a British steamer appeared in the Gulf with trained divers and scientific appliances, but the steps which were at once taken by the Resident, with the approval of the Bombay Government, sufficed to frustrate the attempted encroachment. In 1874, and again in 1890, Her Majesty's Government, on the advice of the Government of India, declined to countenance proposals made by British Companies to exploit the fisheries. In 1894 support was refused to an application by a British subject to the Persian Government for pearling Concessions in the Gulf. In 1899, in connection with the alleged grant of certain privileges to two Europeans by the Persian Government, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh was informed by Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran that no contract could be recognized which would have the effect of interfering with the rights exercised by Chiefs under British protection. In 1901 Sir Nicholas O'Connor, hearing of a project which was under the consideration of the Porte to tax the fisheries, acquainted Tewfik Pasha with the objections which Her late Majesty's Government saw to any action which would interfere with the prescriptive rights of our protected tribes. In 1902 our local officers declined to countenance the project of a British Indian subject, who proposed to obtain facilities for pearling in Abu Dhabi waters. Finally, in 1903, Colonel Kemball reported that two Frenchmen, named Dumas and Castelin, had arrived in Bahrein with the intention of prospecting the pearl banks round that island. The Chief refused to entertain their proposals, and subsequently the strangers left the neighbourhood, one for Turkish Arabia, and the other for Europe, where it was believed that he intended to engage a professional diver. He has, however, not yet reappeared. In connection with the last-mentioned case, we have informed our Political Resident in the Persian Gulf that we entirely approve Sheikh Esa's attitude, and that, in the event of either of these Frenchmen returning to Bahrein, the Chief should refuse to render assistance of any description; that any other Chief who may be similarly approached should return a similar response; and that the Government of India should at once be informed of any renewal of the project, or of any like attempt. We inclose, for your information, a copy of the recent correspondence on this subject.

"We have thus succeeded hitherto in staying off outside interference. We recognize, however, that our position in the matter is in certain respects difficult, and that in the future the same success may not attend measures which in the past have sufficed to attain our object. The question involves considerations, firstly, of private and, secondly, of international law. Our rights in restraining foreign interference are

it appears to us, at any rate commensurate with those of the Arab tribes concerned, since these have agreed to leave the protection of their interests in our hands; and the question which we may hereafter be called upon to answer, whether in defending a civil suit in a British Court, or in meeting an international claim, must be the same, namely, the extent of the rights and jurisdiction possessed by the Arab Chiefs. The chart which we inclose shows that the pearl banks extend to considerable distances from the mainland or from any island. Within the 3-mile limit it seems evident that no difficulty need be encountered, and that the rights over the pearl banks, and the jurisdiction required to assert those rights, are indisputable. Beyond this zone, however, the case is less clear. We understand that it has become an uncontested principle of modern international law that the sea, as a general rule, cannot be subjected to appropriation. At the same time, we believe that it is admitted that portions of the sea may be affected by proprietary rights on the part of the States whose territories it adjoins, and that such rights have been more especially recognized in the case of fisheries, to which the inhabitants of a neighbouring State have established a claim through immemorial exercise of the right of fishing. There can be no doubt that the rights of which they now claim the exclusive enjoyment have been exercised by the Arabs of these coasts from time immemorial; and we consider, therefore, that the fact of these fisheries being in part outside the limits of territorial waters need not necessarily constitute a conclusive bar to the claim. In the pearl fisheries of Ceylon we have a precedent for the exercise of jurisdiction beyond the 3-mile limit under the Colonial Act of 1811, which authorizes the seizure and condemnation of any boat found within the limits of, or hovering near, the pearl banks extending from 6 to 21 miles from the coast; and it may be observed that, in the recent Behring Sea Arbitration, the United States of America cited the Ceylon precedent as justifying their exercise of possession in, and control over, seal fisheries beyond the zone of territorial waters as ordinarily recognized by international law. It is also worth noting that the above contention is supported by the authority of the Swiss publicist, Vattel, who in his "*Droits des Gens*" remarked, in discussing the question as far back as the eighteenth century, "*Qui doutera que les pêcheries de perles de Bahrein et de Ceylan ne puissent légitimement tomber en propriété?*" We believe, therefore, that our claim to exclude all foreign pearling vessels from the limits of the fisheries at present worked by the tribes within our Protectorate might, if challenged, be defended with a reasonable chance of success.

There remains, however, the case of foreign exploitation of deep waters outside the sphere in which we believe that it may be shown that immemorial usage and occupation have conferred prescriptive rights. In this still wider area we doubt whether we possess claims in support of which we could appeal to any law or international practice, and we fear that possible detriment to the pearl banks in which we hold prescriptive rights would furnish no valid ground for objecting to legitimate foreign enterprise outside the sphere of Arab occupation; but by authorizing the Chiefs to abstain from all intercourse with such interlopers, and to utilize the powers which they possess of interdicting the importation of foreign diving appliances, of refusing to lend any assistance in men, boats, or in any other form, or, if necessary in the last resort, of removing any such foreigner from their territories, we might succeed in putting such serious impediments in the way of such enterprises as would discourage outsiders from engaging in them.

The question is fortunately not one in which we are at present called upon to decide as to the exact nature of the rights or the precise limits of the jurisdiction which the several Chiefs possess, and which we, as the paramount Power, are bound to assert and maintain on their behalf; but in view of the possibility of further attempts, whether by British Companies or by foreign capitalists, we think it advisable to be prepared in advance. We shall, therefore, be glad to know whether His Majesty's Government concur in the views above set forth, and to receive any instructions which it may be deemed advisable to issue for the guidance of our local officers in the event of renewed adventures of a more determined character."

II.

"We were honoured with your Lordship's commands, signified in Sir Eldon Gorst's letter of the 19th October last transmitting to us the accompanying papers, relative to the question of the steps to be taken to prevent foreign interference with the rights enjoyed by the tribes on the Arabian coast of the

Persian Gulf in the pearl fisheries, and requesting us to favour your Lordship with our opinion—

"1. As to the legal rights of the tribes within, as also without, the 3-mile territorial limit.

"2. As to the procedure to be followed in expelling interlopers, and dealing with their boats and fishing appliances.

"We have taken the matter into our consideration, and, in obedience to your Lordship's commands, have the honour to report—

"1. That the tribes have a right to the exclusive use of the pearl fisheries within the 3-mile limit, and in any other waters which may justly be considered territorial.

"As regards the fisheries beyond territorial waters, we think that a distinction must be drawn between the *banks* where the tribes have practised pearl fishing and the *deep waters* in which no such fishery has been carried on by them.

"As regards the pearl banks, we think that, as a matter of international law, they are capable of being the property of the tribes to the exclusion of all nations. In addition to the passage cited from Vattel, reference may be made to Puffendorf's Treatise '*De jure Naturæ et gentium*,' Book IV, chapter v, section 7, and to the recent work of Professor Westlake, '*International Law*,' Part I, chapter ix, at pp. 186 and 187, and the case of the protection of the Ceylon pearl banks is a striking illustration of the assertion of this right in practice. Whether such rights in fact exist with regard to these particular pearl banks in the Persian Gulf is a question the answer to which cannot be given with any certainty, as it depends on the evidence available of historical facts with reference to the enjoyment of these fisheries by the tribes and the exclusion of others from them. As far as we can judge, upon the materials before us, we think that there are grounds for asserting the existence of such an exclusive right, and we do not think that in point of law the fact that the enjoyment was by the tribes in common would prevent the acquisition of the right in question. Having regard to the relations of His Majesty's Government with the tribes on the west shore of the Persian Gulf, we think that the existence of this exclusive right may be properly maintained on their behalf by His Majesty's Government.

"With regard to the deep waters in which pearl fishing has not been carried on by the tribes, we think the case is different. There is here no defined area at the bottom of the sea over which the right of fishing has been exercised to the exclusion of other nations, as there is some ground for saying was the case with regard to the pearl banks. We cannot see that the right claimed by the tribes to exclude other nations from these deeper waters could be asserted with any reasonable chance of success.

"2. Having regard to the importance of protecting the deeper waters and to the fact that for the reasons above indicated it cannot be regarded as certain that the right, even to the pearl banks, could be established to the satisfaction of any international Tribunal, we think that it would be preferable to discourage foreign interference by refusing supplies, &c., as suggested in the papers before us. If such measures prove inadequate it may be necessary, having obtained the authority of the Chiefs for this purpose, to compel the removal of vessels engaged in fishing on the pearl banks. Of course, measures of this kind must be taken with caution, as international complications might result from any precipitate action. It might also be practicable—whether it should be done or not is a matter of policy—to raise the question in a form suitable for decision by The Hague Tribunal.

"Fishing within the territorial waters may, of course, be prevented.

"Generally. We desire to add that, having regard to the importance of the question to the tribes, and the fact that we cannot be certain of establishing the right claimed, it is probably desirable that the fishing by foreigners should, if possible, be indirectly stopped without raising the question internationally.

"We have, &c.,

(Signed)

"R. B. FINLAY.

"EDWARD CARSON."

III.

"On receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 10th March, 1904, on the question of the pearl fisheries in the Persian Gulf, I entered into communication with the

Foreign Office with a view to obtaining the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon the legal and international points raised by your Excellency's Government.

"2. I inclose herewith, for the information and guidance of the Government of India, a copy of the correspondence.*

"3. Your Excellency will see that the Law Officers of the Crown have no doubt as to the rights of the tribes in such waters as may justly be considered territorial. Outside territorial waters, they are inclined to hold that the exclusive rights of the tribes might be maintained to banks in regard to which their exclusive possession is capable of historical proof; but they consider that the point is not free from doubt. In regard to the deeper waters, they are of opinion that there would be no reasonable chance of asserting with success the right of the tribes to debar other nations from dredging.

"4. In these circumstances, I agree with the general conclusion at which the Law Officers of the Crown have arrived, viz., that it is not expedient to raise the question internationally by forcibly preventing vessels of foreign nationalities from fishing on the banks. The object in view may probably be attainable by indirect methods."

Summary.

The situation in regard to the pearl fisheries may be summarized as follows:—

The Law Officers of the Crown have laid it down that outside territorial limits, in the deeper waters, there would be no reasonable chance, on grounds of international law, of asserting with success the right of the tribes to debar other nations from dredging. On the other hand, it is apprehended that dredging operations, if carried out on scientific principles, even in the deeper waters alone, would seriously endanger the success of the pearl fishing on the banks, in regard to which the tribes may establish exclusive rights.

The conclusion formulated in 1905 was accordingly that foreign vessels should not forcibly be prevented from fishing on the banks, but that the object in view might probably be attainable by "indirect methods," i.e.:—

"By authorizing the Chiefs to abstain from all intercourse with such interlopers, and to utilize the powers which they possess of interdicting the importation of foreign diving appliances, of refusing to lend any assistance in men, boats, or in any other form, or, if necessary, in the last resort, of removing any such foreigner from their territories."

It can hardly be maintained that this solution is satisfactory; the pursuit of such a course even if effective in its immediate object, might not improbably give rise in practice to a sharp diplomatic conflict, and result in the serious discomfiture of His Majesty's Government, whose guiding principle of free trade in the Gulf would appear as of varying interpretation, while its assertion would clearly be sacrificed to meet the exigencies of a critical situation.

With the rapid extension of German enterprise in these regions the pearl fisheries are not unlikely to receive considerable attention within the next few years, and it appears eminently desirable to determine whether a situation at present fraught with danger and uncertainty cannot be regularized in a manner likely to conciliate conflicting interests.

His Majesty's Government are at present on the horns of a dilemma—on the one hand, they cannot prevent dredging operations by foreigners; on the other, they are faced with the knowledge that such operations will render destitute a large number of Arabs, who in default of the pearl fisheries, must either starve or turn pirates (see p. 13).

For the welfare and the tranquillity of these tribes His Majesty's Government are by prescription responsible; to secure these objects British lives and money have been sacrificed on a large scale; and to abandon now the policy of a century would be both misguided and pusillanimous.

An alternative course would be to approach foreign Governments and to explain the peculiarity of the situation; the measures taken in the course of the last 100

* Not printed.

years to suppress piracy and to maintain order; the interest of all who frequent the Gulf in the tranquillity of the tribes inhabiting the coasts; the complications to which the introduction of scientific appliances in the pearl fisheries would inevitably give rise; the justice and expediency of securing to the Arabs, under time-honoured conditions, the exclusive enjoyment of a necessary means of livelihood; and, finally, the prospect of establishing, in the island of Bahrein, a free mart where merchants of every nation could purchase on equal terms the pearls supplied by native enterprise.

(b.) General Trade Statistics and German Competition.

L.—TABLE showing the Total Number and Tonnage of British and Foreign Steam-ships that entered the various Ports of the Persian Gulf in 1905 and 1906.

	Bahrein.				Bunder Abbas.				Bushire.				Bussorah.			
	1905.		1906.		1905.		1906.		1905.		1906.		1905.		1906.	
	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.	No.	Tons.
British ..	65	95,097	71	100,383	150	225,000	155	232,500	153	192,563	153	221,333	163	187,180	166	209,779
Austro-Hungarian ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
German ..	..	..	4	6,205	..	..	7	14,000	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	9,411
Greek ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Norwegian ..	..	..	..	..	8	16,000	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Russian ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Turkish ..	..	..	1	3,943	..	..	1	2,000	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
United States ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total ..	65	95,097	76	111,131	158	241,000	173	268,500	158	198,278	168	245,238	169	189,440	180	229,127

PROPORTION OF BRITISH STEAM-SHIPPIING, 1906.

	Bahrein.		Bunder Abbas.		Bushire.		Bussorah.		Total of the Four Ports.	
	Per cent.	Tons	Per cent.	Tons	Per cent.	Tons	Per cent.	Tons	Per cent.	Tons
..	91	..	87	..	90	..	91	..	90	..

II.—TABLE showing the Total Value of British and Foreign Imports to the various Ports of the Persian Gulf in 1905-6.

BAHREIN.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Imports to Total Imports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	Rupees.	Rupees.	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	1,03,01,076	1,22,14,220	43	50
Turkish Arabia ..	1,02,85,594	98,70,146	42	40
Muscat ..	1,09,800	1,84,161	15	10
Zanzibar ..	45,700	55,200		
Trucial Oman ..	21,54,650	6,20,648		
Persia ..	13,80,494	13,02,644		
Mukalla ..	24,205	43,473		
United States of America ..	..	1,20,000	100	100
Germany and other countries visited by Hamburg-America Line steamers ..	..	1,44,900		
Total ..	2,43,01,519	2,45,55,392	100	100

BUNDER ABBAS.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Imports to Total Imports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	291,056	197,132	73	56
France ..	10,872	41,246	2	11
Germany ..	14,137	28,549	3	8
Austria-Hungary ..	14,912	31,643	3	9
Russia ..	18,993	3,616	4	1
United States ..	12	30	15	15
Turkey and Turkish Arabia ..	995	1,556		
China ..	12,508	7,462		
Belgium ..	3,070	4,144		
Japan ..	1,380	34		
Italy ..	5	882		
Java ..	8,954	7,463		
Mauritius ..	3,840	44		
Egypt ..	1,493	24		
Sweden ..	695	4,022		
Switzerland ..	25	81		
Muscat ..	620	1,761		
Persian ports ..	15,278	21,782		
Other countries ..	854	462		
Total ..	399,699	351,933	100	100

BUSHIRE.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906-7.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	498,422	596,482	65	70
France	57,717	102,019	8	12
Austria-Hungary	30,831	67,113	4	8
Germany	26,264	25,459	3	3
Dutch East Indies	9,696	19,931	1	2
Turkey	51,517	11,799	7	1
China	13,396	9,899	2	1
Russia	33,981	7,488	5	1
Belgium, United States, &c. ..	40,108	23,652	5	2
Total	761,932	863,842	100	100

BUSSORAH.

[No statistics available.]

III.—TABLE showing the Total Value of British and Foreign Exports from the various Ports of the Persian Gulf in 1905-6.

BAHREIN.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	Rupees.	Rupees.	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	1,29,29,175	1,41,69,250	63	62
Turkish Arabia	62,69,881	75,47,142	31	33
Egypt	32,190			
Germany	72,000	1,00,450		
Muscat	58,327	55,660		
Zanzibar	27,335	39,008	6	5
Trucial Oman	4,84,443	3,45,606		
Persia	2,60,527	3,18,694		
France	3,16,765	1,87,000		
Total	2,04,50,643	2,27,62,810	100	100

BUNDER ABBAS.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	127,533	118,066	82	82
Russia	1,203	10,178	1	7
Turkey and Turkish Arabia ..	7,501	9,388	5	6
China	5	1,080		
Egypt	1,291	355		
Switzerland	407	125		
Arabia	3,844	490		
Muscat	1,099	561	12	5
Bahrein	2,250	1,153		
Hong Kong	5,467			
Arab Coast	781	2,579		
Persian ports	4,120	267		
Other countries	261	135		
Total	155,762	144,387	100	100

BUSHIRE.

Country.	Value.		Proportion of Exports to Total Exports.	
	1905.	1906.	1905.	1906.
	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
United Kingdom and India ..	245,231	325,814	53	54
China	104,382	110,075	22	19
Turkey	40,704	43,818	9	7
Germany	10,565	24,228	2	4
Egypt	24,646	39,941	5	6
America	1,114	16,200		
Austria-Hungary	3	371		
Bahrein	14,064	12,604		
Russia	2,102	10,482	9	10
France	3,314	3,169		
Dutch East Indies	1,469	3,035		
Belgium	5	2,944		
Various	21,741	5,740		
Total	469,940	598,421	100	100

An interesting and exhaustive report was drawn up in November 1907 by Mr. Vice-Consul Chick of Bushire on the operations of the Hamburg-America Line in the Persian Gulf during the first year of their venture, and on the bearing of this venture on the prospects of British commerce. The report was accompanied by detailed statistics.

The main conclusions arrived at were as follows :—

The enterprise involved, on the admission of the master of one of the German vessels, a dead loss of 1,000*l.* every voyage, a statement confirmed by the annual report of the Company in Hamburg, thus affording substance to the contention that the service rested upon State aid. It was expected that the earnings of the second year would fall short of those of the first, as British firms had been aroused by competition to increased activity.

Statistics alone, however, hardly expressed the spirit of competition engendered by the visits of these steamers, for the monopoly of the service enjoyed by a single firm, Messrs. Wöneckhaus, in fostering their own commercial development, coupled

with the keen interest taken in the success of the scheme by the German Government, had aroused an antagonistic feeling amongst the important British firms in the Gulf ports.

Uncertainty as to the ultimate aim of the new undertaking had kept the European mercantile communities in a state of somewhat nervous anticipation. Overtures by the Deutsche-Orient Bank of Hamburg to native British traders in Bunder Abbas, an ostentatious forward policy in Lingah, including the flying of the German flag over two native boats, the endeavour to inaugurate relations with the Arab coast, as well as financial operations in Bushire, and many rumours of other forms of enterprise had added to the perplexity with which the future of German identification with the politics and commerce of Persia was generally regarded.

Certain points were indicated in conclusion as deserving of attention, with a view to meeting the special forms of German competition:—

1. Reform in the local working of the Bank of Persia.
2. Lighterage from British steamers in British owned lighters.
3. Greater regularity in the sailings of British vessels from Persian waters.
4. Establishment of a British Company for transport over the great southern road.
5. More attention to export trade from Southern Persia via Bushire.
6. The forestalment of all German schemes of concessions in the valley of the Karun.
7. Close attention by those firms concerned to the tendencies of German development in the Gulf.
8. The pushing of British sugar and Indian indigo.

Action in regard to the first two points is being taken through the India Office and Board of Trade respectively. The further desiderata, excepting 4 and 6, might be dealt with by the Board of Trade. Point 4 would require careful consideration, and might perhaps be discussed with Messrs. Lynch. Point 6 is already likely to receive the attention of His Majesty's Legation, who have reported fully upon an irrigation project of a Dutch engineer on the Karun.

It is incidentally recommended in Mr. Chick's report that the Imperial Bank of Persia should open a branch at Bahrein. This course is open to objection, since it might lend colour to the contention that Bahrein is Persian territory. On this ground it would seem preferable to encourage the establishment of some bank not connected with Persia—say, the branch of a Bombay house.

(c.) Lighthouses.* †

[Communicated by Mr. Lovat Fraser.]

The following notes are based on conversations with officers of the Navy and Indian Marine, and also with commanders of mail steamers of the British India Company; further, with political officers.

There are at present no lights in the Gulf at all, except a very small one (a beacon) at the southern point of Koweit Harbour.

There is a general consensus of opinion that a light is chiefly wanted on Ras Musandim, at the entrance to the Gulf. For manifest political reasons, this is also desirable. Such a light might be placed—(a) on one of the Quoin Islands; (b) on Musandim Island, the actual point, separated from the mainland; (c) on the mainland behind. All three places are lonely, the climate is bad, supplies would have to be brought from elsewhere, and perhaps there might at first be danger from the local tribesmen. The replies to these objections are that the location is not more lonely than the island lights in the Red Sea, the climate can hardly be worse than that, and supplies in the Red Sea are furnished from Suez. The Musandim light would be actually in sight of Bunder Abbas. I doubt the danger: steamers pass by daily, and there are our gun-boats. As to the relative sites, the Quoin Islands are low, and might be difficult of access. The Navy and Mercantile Marine favour Musandim Island; it would also be a little safer. On political grounds, the mainland is favoured.

* See also p. 117.

† A Report on Lights in the Persian Gulf was drawn up in 1872 by the Consulting Engineer for Kurrachee Harbour. (See India Office Library, No. 718.)

Mail steamers make Musandim at night going up; in the daytime coming down. No tramp steamer dares to approach Musandim at night. The nautical reasons why a light is very necessary are that it is often very thick and foggy at the entrance to the Gulf, where the water is very deep, and vessels cannot run into soundings.

Next, a light is badly needed on one of the islands between Lingah and Bushire. Alternative sites are (a) Ras Al Mufat, (b) Sheikh Shuaib, (c) Keis, (d) Farur. Taking first Farur, it is 465 feet high, with a peculiar outline, having a small peak in the middle. Sailors say they can make it out in the thickest weather. Sheikh Shuaib and Ras Al Mufat can generally be located by soundings. Opinion seems to be in favour of Keis, because it is a sufficient distance from Bushire, and because a good course can be shaped thence, up or down.

Thirdly, a light is required on Kubbar Island, south of Koweit, for making Koweit Harbour. The little beacon on the mainland at Ras Al Arz is very insufficient. All authorities, nautical and otherwise, are in favour of Kubbar Island, which is the property of the Sheikh of Koweit, and easily supplied.

As to Bahrein, there is an outer buoy, but it is difficult to make. Sailors would like to see this buoy replaced by a lightship. The landing is bad, and very shallow for a long distance. Captain Prideaux, the Political Agent, has worked out some sort of scheme by which it might be improved greatly at a moderate cost, I think by reclamation of part of the foreshore. This might be a cheap and useful method of creating additional interests. Bahrein trade is very promising, but better facilities are greatly needed. I think it was here that the "Viceroy of India" was stuck on a rock for an hour or two, an incident which passed unrecorded.

At the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab there is a buoy laid down by the British India Company, but it is difficult to pick up, almost impossible at night. It ought to be replaced by a lightship.

At Bushire there should be a light by the telegraph station.

Quite apart from political considerations, lights are badly needed in the Gulf. Navigation there is attended with great danger at night, especially since the speed of mail steamers has been accelerated.

(d.) British Cables.

[Communicated by the India Office.]

General.

In a despatch dated the 21st September, 1899, the Government of India wrote as follows:—

"During the last thirty years the maintenance of the submarine cables of the Indo-European Telegraph Department from Fao to Jask, and of the land-lines from that place to Karachi, has devolved upon the Indian Government, and has tended to increase an already preponderant influence over both the waters and the shores of this sea (i.e., the Persian Gulf)."

The following are the dates on which the various lines between India and the head of the Persian Gulf were completed:—

Mekran Coast land-line from Karachi to Gwadar*	..	..	April	1863
Cable from Gwadar to Fao, via Cape Musandim and Bushire	..	..	April	8, 1864
[In January 1869 this cable was diverted from Cape Musandim to Jask, whence it ran via Henjam Island to Bushire and Fao.]				
Cable from Gwadar to Karachi	..	..	May	16, 1864
Land-line from Gwadar to Jask	..	..	Aug.	15, 1869
Second cable, running direct from Jask to Bushire, without touching at Henjam Island	..	..	Nov.	1869
Cable from Jask to Muscat	..	..	Nov.	25, 1901
Cable from Henjam Island to Bunder Abbas	..	..	Dec.	31, 1905

[This cable was constructed by the Indo-European Telegraph Department for the Persian Government, to whom it is to be transferred on repayment of the cost of construction. No repayment has yet been made.]

* Gwadar, which lies some 50 miles on the British side of the Persian frontier in Mekran, is Muscat territory. British telegraphic rights there are covered by the Convention of 1865 with the Sultan of Muscat, quoted below in the section dealing with Muscat.

At the present time the Indo-European Telegraph Department maintains establishments at the following ports of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea lying outside British territory: Fao, Bushire, Henjam, Jask, Muscat, Chahbar, and Gwadar.* The submarine cable touches the coast at all these points with the exception of Chahbar, which is a station on the land-line from Jask to Karachi.

The staff employed by the Department at the various stations is as follows:—

						Higher Staff.	Menial Establishment.
Fao	..	..	..	..	..	5	7
Bushire	..	..	..	..	..	15	17
Henjam	..	..	..	..	..	2	5
Jask	..	..	..	..	..	10	14
Muscat	..	..	..	..	..	2	5
Gwadar	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Chahbar	..	..	..	..	..	3	4
Total	..	..	..	..	..	37	53

According to information supplied in January 1905, the number of guards employed to protect telegraph stations in the Gulf were as follows:—

Reshire (Bushire)	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Jask	..	..	..	..	..	..	52
Chahbar	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	116

Rights acquired at different Stations.

1. *Fao*.—The rights of the British Government at Fao were defined in the Anglo-Turkish Convention of the 3rd September, 1864, "for the establishment of telegraphic communication between India and the Ottoman territory."

Clauses III-V of this Convention ran as follows:—

"III. His Majesty the Sultan authorizes the establishment on Ottoman territory, at the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, of a British telegraph office, with a staff, which shall not exceed in number fifty persons, placed under the exclusive orders of a British station-master, and which, as well as the apparatus and all the instruments requisite for working the submarine line, shall be at the expense of the British Government.

"IV. The aforesaid British office shall be located in the same building occupied by the Ottoman station at the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, with a view to facilitate the combined operations of the common service.

"The apparatus of the Ottoman service and that of the British service at that joint station shall be placed in separate compartments, but in close proximity to each other, and shall not be connected.

"The exchange of messages shall take place immediately on their receipt, the officers handing them to each other through a window, and the service of the British and Ottoman offices shall be permanent. The rent and cost of maintenance of the mixed telegraphic station shall be shared in equal proportions by the British and Ottoman Administrations.

"V. It is well understood that the active service of the British office on Ottoman territory shall be limited to the receipt and delivery by hand to the Ottoman office of the messages arriving from India by the submarine cable; to the transmission of those which are delivered to it by the Ottoman office; and, lastly, to the superintendence and maintenance of a safe and regular submarine communication between the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab and India.

"The Direction-in-Chief of the mixed station shall devolve on the Ottoman Administration, but without the right of interfering in the internal administration of the British office."

2. *Bushire*.—As regards our cable stations in Persian territory, the leading document is the Agreement made with the Persian Government in December 1862

* See note on previous page.

for the construction of a line of telegraph via Khanikin on the Turco-Persian frontier, through Tehran overland to Bushire, as an alternative to the line through Turkey to Fao, and thence by cable via Bushire to India. It was decided at the time not to make formal application for landing rights on Persian territory for the cable down the Gulf; but an understanding was arrived at with the Persian Government, in pursuance of which the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs sent the following instructions to the Governor of Bushire on the 18th May, 1863:—

"As you already know, by desire of His Majesty the Shah, the Persian Government are about to construct a telegraph line from the frontier of Kermanshah to Bushire, and the English Government, as they may feel disposed, are at liberty to join their telegraphic wires, which are to be brought by submarine line, to the Persian wires; it is therefore necessary that they should have a telegraph station on the coast, and His Majesty has ordered that a station should be erected for this purpose at Resheer,* under the directions of the Prince Itizad-u-Sultaneh, which is to be given to the British Government for an annual rent. In the meantime, as the English cable may shortly reach Bushire, and on its arrival they may require a place at once in which to keep their stores and materials before the regular station is completed, you will now at once, after communicating with the Resident and ascertaining the exact spot where the cable will be landed, proceed to erect a building according to the accompanying plan given by the Prince in a suitable position, and get it in readiness, so that they may not suffer in convenience."

Jask.—Landing rights at Jask were held to be implied in Article II of the Anglo-Persian Convention of the 2nd April, 1868, in which provision was made, in view of the possibility of accident to the Gulf cable, for the "construction and efficient working of a line of telegraph between Gwadar and a point between Jask and Bunder Abbas." Article II of this Convention contained the provision that "the English Government will pay annually to the Persian Government the sum of 3,000 toman for leave to lay down the line of telegraph on these coasts and places which are under the sovereignty of Persia."

The possession of land for a cable station at Jask was, moreover, set forth in the "Jask Agreement" of the 25th February, 1887, from which the following clause is quoted verbatim:—

"That the telegraph establishment, which is situated at a distance of 300 yards from the point, take possession of 600 yards more to the north of the telegraph establishment, i.e., 400 yards from the present boundary fence, between which and the telegraph establishment is a distance of 200 yards, making a total from the end of the promontory to the limits of 900 yards; at the end of these 900 yards a wire boundary will be drawn, and the Government of Jask shall have no right whatsoever on any account whatever to interfere in the interior of those limits."

The Agreement also contained the following clauses:—

"It is agreed that if any of the defendants of Jask, other than the true, positive, and salaried servants of the telegraph establishment, in order to take sanctuary or protection, penetrate within the limits, the telegraph officials shall have no right to protect them; on the contrary, they should place them without their boundary, and hand them over to the Government of Jask.

"Any merchant, native or foreign, who may have shops within the limits must pay the usual customs dues on that which he imports in order to trade, buy, or sell."

Chahbar.—British rights at Chahbar are presumably covered by Article II of the 1863 Convention, by which, in return for an annual payment, the British Government obtained "leave to lay down the line of telegraph on these coasts and places which are under the sovereignty of Persia."

Henjam.—The telegraph station at Henjam was established in 1869, on the diversion of the cable from Cape Musandim; it was abandoned in 1881 and reoccupied in April 1904. As regards the ownership of the island, it should be observed that in 1868, when the question of a telegraph station had arisen, Colonel Pelly reported that in his opinion Henjam was a possession of Muscat; but the Government of India of

* Situated on the Bushire peninsula, some 6 miles south of the town (Curzon's "Persia," vol. ii, p. 235).

the day elected to proceed in their negotiations for a telegraph station on the assumption that the island belonged to Persia. The Concession granted to the British Government in 1868 was embodied in the following Minute by the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated the 29th March, 1868:—

“With respect to permission for the cable telegraph station on the Island of Angaum (Henjam), the number of persons to be employed, and the extent of accommodation to be provided on the said island in accordance with the Memorandum dated the 14th March, and the plans forwarded to the Persian Foreign Office on the 28th of the same month, after being approved by the British Mission, the Persian Ministers, in order to strengthen the friendly relations between the two Governments, will give permission and authority in the manner indicated, provided that the number of employés and extent of the buildings are not allowed at any time to exceed those explained in the Memorandum received from the British Legation.”

When our telegraph station was re-established in 1904, in connection with the scheme for establishing telegraphic communication with Bunder Abbas, Sir A. Hardinge informed the Persian Government that “there is no intention on the part of the Government of India to support any such claim (*i.e.*, to Henjam) of the Chief of Debai [whose subjects the local Arabs claimed to be], or to repudiate the authority of the Persian Government.” The Persian Government, however, chose to assert their authority by sending a Customs officer to the island, much to the resentment of the local Arabs. A controversy arose with the Persian Government as to the limits to be assigned to our telegraph station and as to the position of a Persian Customs office on the island. The dispute still remains unsettled.

Bunder Abbas.—As has already been stated, the Convention of the 2nd April, 1868, empowered the British Government to “make arrangements with regard to the construction and efficient working of a line of telegraph between Gwador and a point between Jask and Bunder Abbas.” The question of bringing Bunder Abbas into telegraphic connection with the outer world was definitely raised in 1901. In their despatch of the 21st January, 1904, Lord Curzon’s Government stated that when the Viceroy was at Bunder Abbas, during his visit to the Persian Gulf, “he was earnestly pressed both by the local traders and also by the Salar-i-Moazzam, Governor of the Gulf ports, to lend his assistance to the connection of Bunder Abbas by telegraph with the outer world”; and it was accordingly anticipated that the proposal would prove acceptable to the Persian Government. Difficulty was, however, encountered, and, in view of the obstructive attitude of the Persian Government, the cable was carried back to Henjam under the authority of the Concession of 1868.

Subsequently, this reconnection with Henjam being a *fait accompli*, an Agreement was signed on the 13th May, 1905, by Sir A. Hardinge and the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs for the construction of “a line of telegraph to connect the Indo-European telegraph station at Henjam with Bunder Abbas across Kishm.” The line was to belong to the Persian Government, but the Indo-European Telegraph Departments were “to provide the engineers and materials necessary for the construction.” In the second paragraph of this Agreement it was provided that, “as soon as the line is complete, and the cost of materials and charges of the engineers and telegraph ship have been paid, the line shall be handed over to the Persian Ministry of Telegraphs.” The charges to be incurred were not to exceed 75,000 rupees, the payment of which sum was guaranteed by the Persian Government. It should be added that the Persian Government has not yet paid back the cost of construction, and the line has, in consequence, not yet been handed over. The cable house at Bunder Abbas is in charge of an employé of the British Consulate who receives an allowance from the Indo-European Telegraph Department, but the site of the proposed telegraph office has not yet been settled, the question, like that of the station on Henjam Island, having formed the subject of a prolonged controversy with the Persian Government.

Muscat.—The cable from Jask to Muscat was completed in 1901, in accordance with an Agreement concluded with the Sultan of Muscat in 1865, stipulating that “the British Government shall be at liberty to construct one or more telegraphic lines, and to erect telegraph stations in any portion of territory subject to the sovereignty of His Highness, both in Arabia and Mekran, which shall be most convenient to them.” The Sultan of Muscat also agreed to “afford protection to the best of his ability to the lines

of telegraph, the telegraph stations, and the persons employed in their construction and maintenance.”

British Rights at former Telegraph Stations in the Gulf.

Telegraph Island.—Telegraph Island, which lies in Elphinstone Inlet, off the Musandim promontory, was occupied in 1864 “without reference either to the Sultan of Muscat or to any other authority” (Minute by Lord Curzon, dated the 6th October, 1902, forming an inclosure to the Government of India’s despatch of the 23rd October, 1902), for the purpose of erecting a station on the Gulf cable. The station was abandoned in 1869, when the cable was diverted from Musandim to Jask and Henjam. Since that date the island has not been occupied by us in any way.

The question of our status on Telegraph Island, which appears to be little more than a rock, arose in 1904 in connection with the proposals for selecting naval bases in the Gulf, which were the outcome of Lord Curzon’s visit to those regions.

On the 24th August, 1904, His Majesty’s Government sanctioned a proposal of the Government of India to erect flagstaffs on three points at Cape Musandim, of which the site of the old buildings on Telegraph Island was one. The flagstaffs were erected, but as a result of representations by the Admiralty, it was subsequently decided that two out of the three should be abandoned. It was recognized that Telegraph Island, in view of its occupation from 1864–9, stood in a different position from the other sites selected, and the orders of His Majesty’s Government conveyed in Mr. Brodrick’s telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 31st March, 1905, approved the maintenance of the flagstaff on Telegraph Island “as a sign of the continuance of our occupation of the spot, which first took place in connection with the operations of the Eastern Telegraph Company.” In a despatch dated the 19th May, 1905, the Government of India were requested to reconsider the question of maintaining the flagstaff. They were informed that “the opinion of His Majesty’s Government with regard to the flagstaff on Telegraph Island was based on the conclusion,” formulated in the Government of India’s letter of the 23rd October, 1902, “that the jurisdiction of the Sultan of Muscat over the Makhlab Isthmus and Musandim promontory was of so uncertain and ineffective a character that it would be open to His Majesty’s Government to ignore it;” recent local inquiries had materially affected this view of the Sultan’s position, and it was therefore requested that the Government of India “will again take the question into consideration in the light of the further information now in your possession,” and would inform His Majesty’s Government of their conclusions. It may be added that, apart from Captain Lorimer’s “local inquiries,” which were alluded to in the despatch, the circumstances had been further modified, inasmuch as the British “Counter-Case” in The Hague Arbitration regarding Muscat had admitted the sovereignty of the Sultan of Muscat in the Musandim promontory.

On the 26th September, 1907, the Government of India recommended that no further action should be taken in the matter, beyond leaving the flagstaff on Telegraph Island where it is, and this proposal is now under the consideration of His Majesty’s Government.

PART IV.—CONCLUSION.

The political connection of England with the Persian Gulf may be said to begin with the defeat of the Portuguese at Hormuz. The Council at Surat came to an agreement with Shah Abbas, and dispatched a fleet consisting of five ships, which co-operated with the Persians in reducing Hormuz and compelling the Portuguese to take refuge in Muscat. Their power had been rudely shaken by their expulsion from Gombroon, the modern Bunder Abbas, which had become an important trading station on the main land opposite Hormuz; this was followed by their expulsion in 1622 from Hormuz itself.

From this time the influence of the English was steadily consolidated. On condition that they maintained two ships of war in the Gulf to safeguard navigation they were to receive half the customs of Bunder Abbas, and their goods were to be admitted duty free into that port. Their position was, indeed, so far from being an exclusive one, that a French and a Dutch factory were established there before the end of the reign of Shah Abbas, who died in 1628. But it is clear, nevertheless, that as

Mr. T. J. Bennett’s paper (*verbatim extracts*). Lieutenant Low’s “History of the Indian Marine.” Sir J. Malcolm’s “History Persia.”

time went on the English did acquire an exceptional *status* in the Gulf, and that at a very early period in the history of the English connection with these waters there may be found the germ of the larger responsibility and influence which this country was afterwards to assume there. The Persians, who at all periods of their history abhorred and dreaded the sea, were glad to secure an undertaking from the East India Company at the time of the expulsion of the Portuguese from Hormuz, to maintain two ships in the Gulf to protect trade, and six years later the Surat Council went in excess of this stipulation in sending five vessels to revive and increase the trade with Persia, and carry on naval operations against the Portuguese.

The rivalry of the Dutch soon became as embarrassing as that of the Portuguese had been. They sent eight ships to Bussorah, where the English had opened trade in 1635, and almost ruined the factory there; at Bunder Abbas they proved such bad neighbours that the Company were forced to remove the bulk of their property to Bussorah, and though the factory was retained until 1761, for the last century of its existence it was the seat of a very insignificant business.

The closing of the establishment at Bunder Abbas was almost immediately followed by the opening of a factory at Bushire, which has since become the political and commercial head-quarters of the British in the Gulf. The Firman of Karim Khan, under which the Bushire factory was established in 1763, was granted to one Price, as "Governor-General for the English nation in the Gulf of Persia," and to a certain Benjamin Jervis, Resident, in response to a demand for "a grant of their ancient privileges in these kingdoms." It concedes not only an unbounded, but a virtually exclusive, liberty of trade to the English. A site for a factory, as well as a garden and burial ground, was granted. The servants of the English were to be exempt from the local jurisdiction, and the English were to hoist their own colours, as they had been allowed to do at Bunder Abbas, and to have twenty-one guns for saluting. Taken in connection with a new Firman, granted in 1788 by Karim Khan's nephew, who expressed his desire that the English merchants should "sleep in the cradle of security and confidence," it shows that towards the end of the eighteenth century England had attained a position in the Gulf to which none of her competitors could lay claim.

The service that Great Britain rendered to humanity by preserving the peace of the Gulf during the nineteenth century has already been indicated. It found formal embodiment in the maritime truce at first imposed upon the warring Chiefs on the coast in 1836, renewed from time to time, and made perpetual in 1853. In her efforts to put down the Slave Trade Great Britain had no help from any other Power. How extensive it was may be gathered from the fact that in the early thirties the annual imports of slaves into Kurrachee alone amounted to between 700 and 800. The work of policing the Gulf may be less arduous than it was in old days, but the spirit of piracy is latent, and a break in the continuity of British vigilance would be followed by a return of the old disorders. The beneficial effects of our past policy in this regard are frequently seen in the manumission at the Consulate of Muscat of slaves claiming their freedom under Sir Bartle Frere's Treaty of 1873. *In one other noteworthy respect Great Britain has contributed in a very substantial degree to the peace of the Gulf and the countries adjacent—in the help which the British authorities, political and naval, have given in the repression of the Arms Traffic.

The predominant position which Great Britain has gradually acquired, and the policy evolved from the rights and obligations upon which that predominant position rests, are forcibly demonstrated in a series of official despatches and public statements included in the records of the past half century. From these a selection of three has been made, viz., an extract from a despatch from the Government of India, written in 1870 and entirely approved by the Duke of Argyll as Secretary of State for India; a declaration made by Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords in 1903; and a despatch from Sir E. Grey to His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, dated August 1907.

I.

"Apart from the positive engagements which we have contracted with the Arab Chiefs, and from which it is neither possible nor desirable that we should recede, the present is not a time when we can encourage the revival of old and

* The subject of "Quarantine" is dealt with in a separate Memorandum.

unfounded claims such as those which Persia now puts forward [to Bahrein]. During the years of peace that have followed the establishment of our supremacy in the Persian Gulf, trade has enormously increased, and the predatory Arabs have embarked in peaceful and mercantile pursuits on the faith of the security which our protectorate affords. British steamers now ply weekly from one end of the Gulf to the other, and our subjects have embarked large capital in the pearl fisheries on the coast and in the commerce of Mesopotamia, Persia, and Arabia. Every day the importance of the Gulf as a commercial highway between Europe and the East is increasing. Even if the political engagements which we have contracted admitted of such a course, and Persia were possessed of an adequate naval force, it would be almost impossible and certainly impolitic to commit to her the guardianship of these vast and varied interests. Any indication on our part even of a desire to do so would probably be followed by the decline of trade, the outbreak of hostilities, piracy, and plunder, and a return to the disorder and lawlessness which during the last half century we have so successfully restrained."

II.

"The noble Lord asked me for a statement of our policy with regard to the Persian Gulf. I think I can give him one in a few simple words. It seems to me that our policy should be directed, in the first place, to protect and promote British trade in those waters. In the next place, I do not think that he suggests, or that we should suggest, that those efforts should be directed towards the exclusion of the legitimate trade of other Powers. In the third place—I say it without hesitation—we should regard the establishment of a naval base, or of a fortified port, in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal. I say that in no minatory spirit, because, so far as I am aware, no proposals are on foot for the establishment of a foreign naval base in the Persian Gulf. I at least have heard of none; and I cannot help thinking that the noble Lord waxed almost unnecessarily warm at the idea of such a foreign intrusion, with which, so far as I am aware, we are not at present threatened. Well, the noble Lord then touched upon a series of points connected with our commercial interests in the Gulf. It is impossible, to my mind, to dissociate our commercial and our political interests."

III.

"I have to-day authorized your Excellency by telegraph to sign a Convention with the Russian Government containing Arrangements on the subject of Persia, Afghanistan, and Thibet.

"The Arrangement respecting Persia is limited to the regions of that country touching the respective frontiers of Great Britain and Russia in Asia, and the Persian Gulf is not part of those regions, and is only partly in Persian territory. It has not therefore been considered appropriate to introduce into the Convention a positive declaration respecting special interests possessed by Great Britain in the Gulf, the result of British action in those waters for more than a hundred years.

"His Majesty's Government have reason to believe that this question will not give rise to difficulties between the two Governments should developments arise which make further discussion affecting British interests in the Gulf necessary. For the Russian Government have in the course of the negotiations leading up to the conclusion of this Arrangement explicitly stated that they do not deny the special interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf—a statement of which His Majesty's Government have formally taken note.

"In order to make it quite clear that the present Arrangement is not intended to affect the position in the Gulf, and does not imply any change of policy respecting it on the part of Great Britain, His Majesty's Government think it desirable to draw attention to previous declarations of British policy, and to reaffirm generally previous statements as to British interests in the Persian Gulf and the importance of maintaining them.

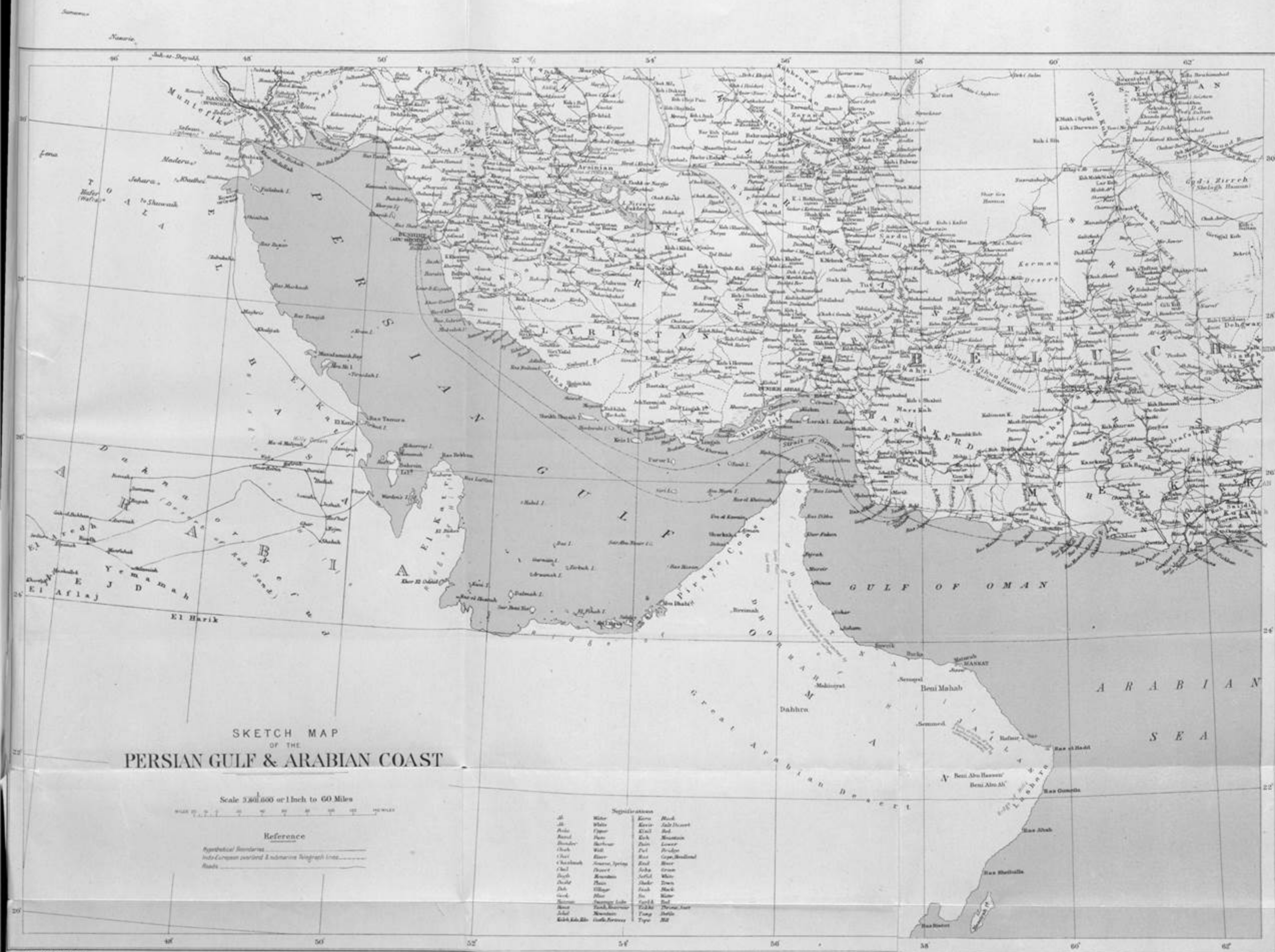
"His Majesty's Government will continue to direct all their efforts to the preservation of the *status quo* in the Gulf and the maintenance of British trade; in doing so, they have no desire to exclude the legitimate trade of any other Power."

It is abundantly clear from the passages quoted that the vital issues involved in the maintenance of British predominance in the Persian Gulf are appreciated; but, none the less, the recent activity of the Germans in pushing their interests in these regions has been so marked that there is reason, under existing conditions, to fear a serious diminution of our influence—first commercial, but eventually political; and this process cannot but be accelerated if the Bagdad Railway is completed under German auspices alone. It would seem, accordingly, that the moment has arrived when a policy of constructive action might advantageously be substituted for one which is defensive in character, and practically limited to a declaration, *urbi et orbi*, that His Majesty's Government will resist by force any attempt to establish a fortified base in the Persian Gulf—a consummation which is scarcely likely to arise, and which, since the destruction of the Russian fleet and the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention, has passed outside the range of practical diplomacy.

Lord Lansdowne's declaration of May 1903 was made primarily as a warning to Russia, who was then suspected of harbouring designs upon Charbar. It was also intended, though this contingency was considered less likely to arise, to prevent the construction of a fortified terminus of the Bagdad Railway. It is, however, practically certain that the Germans will not stir up a hornet's nest by doing precisely what His Majesty's Government are publicly pledged to resist. A policy of gradual commercial absorption has far more to commend it, while, on the other hand, it cannot give rise to legitimate protests on the part of His Majesty's Government. But the whole history of the Persian Gulf, whether in the time of the Portuguese, the Dutch, or the English, has shown that commercial prosperity inevitably leads to political hegemony, and in these circumstances it is matter for grave consideration whether, on political grounds, exceptional measures should not be taken to facilitate British enterprise in the Persian Gulf, and to neutralize the efforts being made to undermine our existing position.

It is to draw attention to these measures that the present Memorandum has been drawn up, and, even if the precise proposals which have been indicated do not meet with approval, it may confidently be said that some change of policy will be called for to meet the exigencies of an altered situation, and that opportunities should be seized or created in order to consolidate our position, and to turn to advantage by timely action the few years which may remain before the advent of the Bagdad Railway.

Foreign Office,
February 12, 1908.



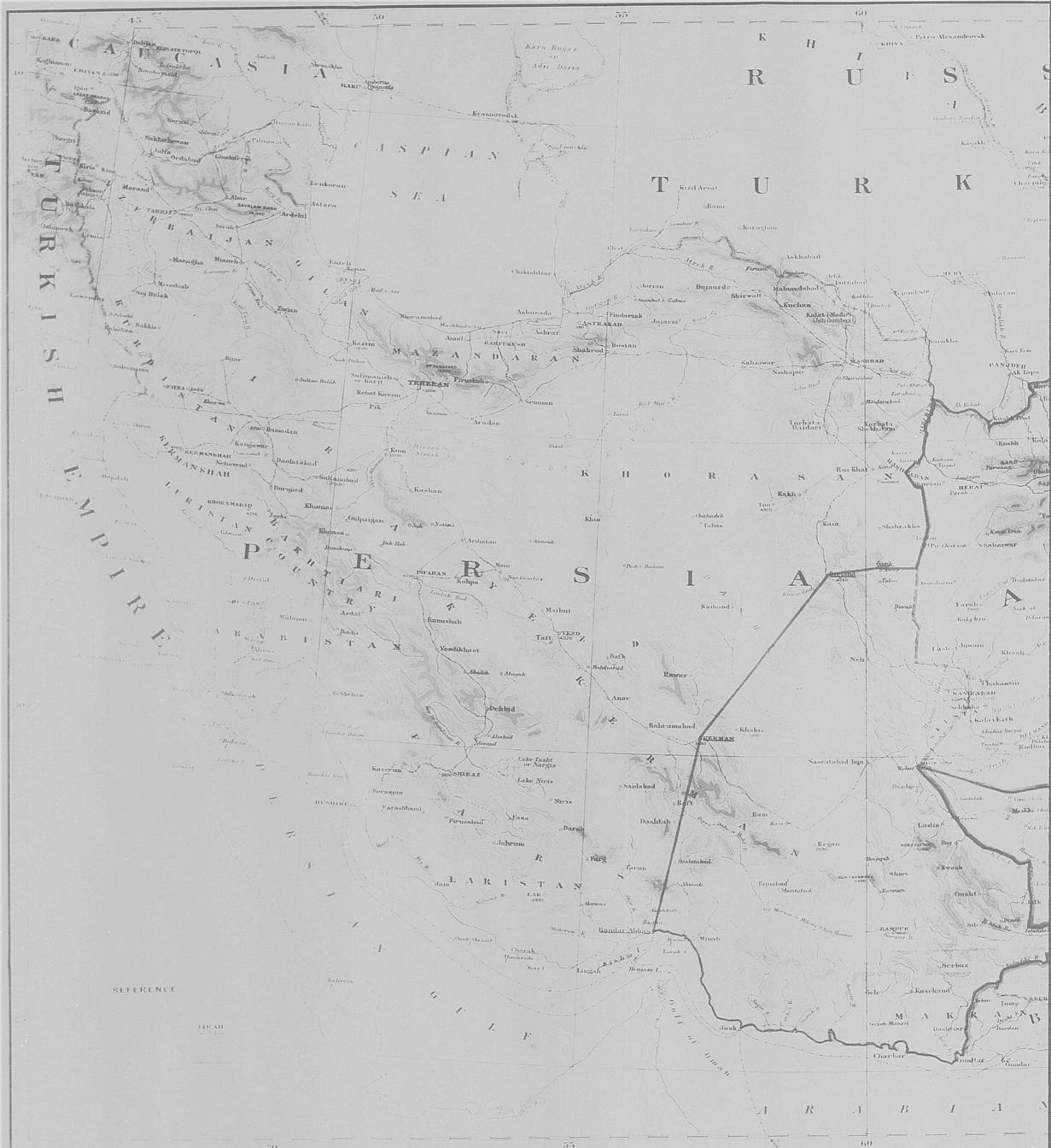
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War Office March 1945

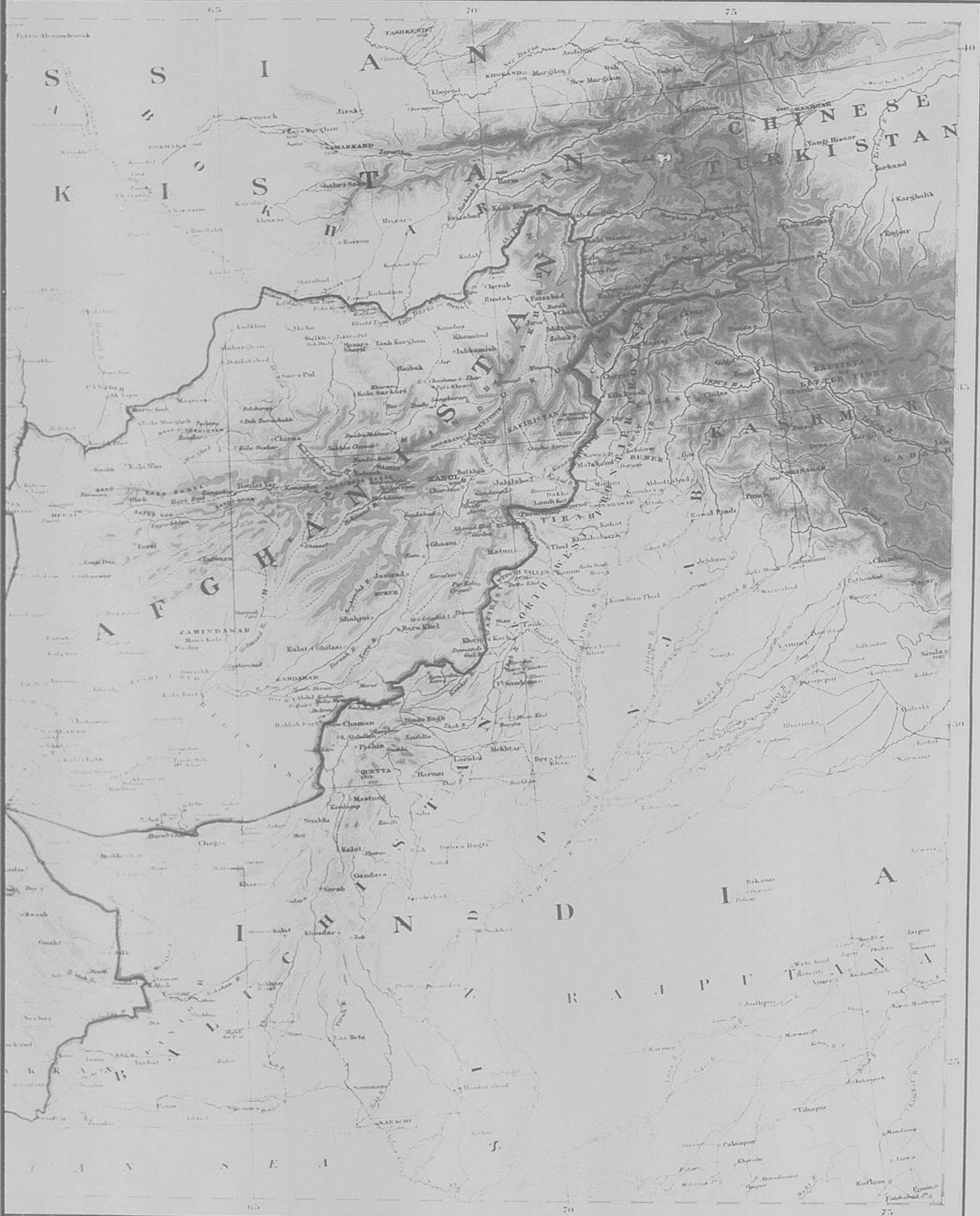


REFERENCE

TABLE

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PERSIA & AFGHANISTAN



APPENDIX (A).

(BY MR. E. PARKES.)

(1.) *British Declarations to the Persian Government respecting their Claim to Sovereignty over Bahrein.*

IN 1822 a Convention was concluded between Captain Bruce, then Resident of the East India Company in the Persian Gulf, and the Vizier of the Prince Governor of Fars, admitting the right of Persia to Bahrein. This Convention was never ratified, but, on the contrary, the arrangement was entirely disavowed by the Government of Bombay, who, as a public mark of their disapprobation, removed Captain Bruce from his post.

2. The India Office have stated that, in 1825, the Persians laid claim to the sovereignty of Bahrein, and that the British Government refused to recognize the claim.

3. Sheikh Abdulla of Bahrein was, in consequence of family dissensions, driven out of the island, and sought to enlist the sympathy of Persia. It was reported to Her Majesty's Government, in 1844, that the Persian Government intended to take part in the disputes. The Persian Prime Minister was consequently informed that, unless Persia could show a clear and indisputable right to the sovereignty of Bahrein, she must be prepared to encounter, in any scheme of the kind, the active opposition of the British Government. To support further representations, arguments were supplied to Colonel Sheil showing generally the grounds on which Her Majesty's Government were unable to recognize as valid the claims advanced by Persia to the sovereignty of Bahrein.

4. In February 1848, the Persian Government objected to British interference in the affairs of Bahrein, but were informed that the British Government could not recognize as valid the claims advanced by Persia to the sovereignty of the island.

5. An understanding was arrived at, in 1861, between the Government of India and the India and Foreign Offices, that Bahrein should be regarded as independent and as subject neither to Turkey nor Persia. Subsequently a Treaty was concluded with the Sheikh (as an independent Ruler) for the suppression of piracy, and Her Majesty's Government refused to concur in a proposal made by the Shah that the sovereignty of Bahrein should be transferred to the Persian Crown.

6. In 1862 the Persian Envoy at Paris complained of the seizure, by British authorities, of a vessel belonging to the Sheikh of Bahrein. Lord Cowley informed him that Her Majesty's Government could not recognize any claim on the part of Persia to question their proceedings in regard to Bahrein.

7. In reply to a complaint made respecting the proceedings at Bahrein of the British Resident, the Persian Minister in London was informed, on the 5th March, 1869, that the Sheikh of Bahrein was an independent Chief, with whom the British Government had Treaty engagements, and whom they must hold strictly to the performance of those engagements.

8. In the course of negotiations relative to the status of Bahreinese in Persia, the British Chargé d'Affaires was instructed, in February 1906, to inform the Persian Government that His Majesty's Government had never admitted ownership or sovereignty of Persia over Bahrein, and such a claim was wholly inadmissible. He was further to state that His Majesty's Government considered the island and its inhabitants to be under British protection, and must decline to entertain any further representations on the subject.

9. In 1907 the Persian claim to the sovereignty of Bahrein was again urged, on the ground that it had been acknowledged in the Agreement made in 1822 by Captain Bruce. The British Minister at Tehran reminded the Persian Grand Vizier that this Treaty had been expressly disavowed by the British Government, and that Captain Bruce had been recalled.

Sir C. Spring-Rice added, in a later note to the Grand Vizier, that the Shah himself had refused to recognize the stipulations of the Treaty, which had never been ratified.

1822.

Mr. E. Hertslet's Memorandum, March 23, 1874, p. 7.

1825.

India Office letter, April 29, 1869.

1844.

To Colonel Sheil, No. 23, August 21, 1844.

Mr. E. Hertslet's Memorandum, March 23, 1874, p. 8.

1848.

Colonel Farrant, No. 11, May 2, 1848.

1861.

To India Office, February 12, 1861.

Précis of inclosures in India Office letter of March 23, 1870.

1862.

To Lord Cowley, No. 209, February 22, 1862.

1869.

To General Mohsin Khan, March 5, 1869.

1906.

To Mr. Grant Duff, February 9, 1906.

Mr. Grant Duff, No. 51, February 27, 1906.

1907.

Sir C. Spring-Rice, No. 3, January 3, 1907.

Sir C. Spring-Rice, No. 61, March 27, 1907.

(2.) *British Declarations to the Ottoman Government respecting their Claim to Sovereignty over Bahrein.*

1839.
Mr. E. Hertslet's Memorandum, March 23, 1874, p. 5.
1851.
To Sir Stratford Canning, No. 40, February 12, 1851.
1870.
To Mr. Barron, No. 19, February 8, 1870; and from ditto, No. 21, February 19, 1870.
1874.
To Musurus Pasha, April 14, 1874.
1874.
Sir H. Elliot, No. 9, January 8, 1875.
1875.
Sir H. Elliot, No. 657, October 12, 1875.
1876.
Sir H. Elliot, No. 371, April 12, 1876.
1879.
Sir H. Layard, No. 759, August 24, 1879.
1888.
Sir W. White, No. 112, March 15, 1888.
To Sir W. White, No. 121, April 17, 1888.
1892.
Sir Clare Ford, No. 348, November 15, 1892.
1892.
Sir Clare Ford, No. 110 (Telegraphic), December 11, 1892.
1893.
Sir Clare Ford, No. 189, May 11, 1893.
- In 1839, on the occasion of the irruption of the Egyptian Army into Nejd, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf informed the agent of the Egyptian Commander that the British Government could not admit any claim of the Pasha (i.e., Egypt and Turkey) upon Bahrein.
2. In 1851 the Sheikh of Bahrein was reported to be desirous of placing himself under Turkish protection. Sir Stratford Canning was thereupon instructed to inform the Turkish Ministers that Her Majesty's Government could not acknowledge nor acquiesce in any such arrangement, seeing that the Government of British India had had relations with Bahrein as an independent State, and had concluded with it certain Treaties. He was, moreover, to inform them that the British Government must object to any arrangement which would transfer Bahrein to the dominion or protectorship of any other Power.
3. In January 1870, the Turkish Ambassador in London communicated to the Foreign Office a telegram from the Porte, asking for an explanation of the proceedings at Bahrein of the British Resident. In this telegram Bahrein was referred to in the following terms: "L'île de Bahrein n'ayant jamais cessé, que nous sachions, de faire partie des possessions Ottomanes." Upon this, the British Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed "to explain courteously to the Porte that the British Government could not recognize its claim to the sovereignty of Bahrein, with regard to which a similar decision was pronounced by Lord Palmerston in his despatch of the 12th February, 1851."
4. In 1874, in reference to a claim made by the Porte to enforce conscription against natives of Bahrein resident in Bussorah, the Turkish Ambassador was referred to the communications of 1851 and 1870, distinctly stating that Her Majesty's Government did not admit the claim of Turkey to consider Bahrein as a part of the Ottoman dominions, and that, if natives of that island applied to British Consuls in Turkey for protection, the latter could not refuse their good offices on behalf of such persons.
5. In 1874 a piratical attack was made upon Bahrein by the Beni Hajir tribe, instigated by Nazir-bin-Mobarik and other Bahrein exiles, who signed a Petition claiming the protection of the Turkish Government. A Memorandum on this subject was handed to the Porte by the British Ambassador, in which it was stated that the British Government could not recognize any rights or pretensions of the Porte over the island.
6. At the end of 1875 the British Ambassador at Constantinople spoke to the Turkish Minister, Safvet Bey, about the supposed intention of the Porte to cause a lighthouse to be erected at Bahrein, and pointed out to him that Her Majesty's Government would not allow the independence of Bahrein to be interfered with from any quarter, and that any claim on the part of the Porte to sovereignty over Bahrein would not be acquiesced in by them.
7. In 1876 steps were taken by the Governor of Bussorah to enforce the claims of El Katr merchants against Bahrein. Sir H. Elliot addressed a note to the Turkish Government on the subject, reminding them of the determination of Her Majesty's Government to protect Bahrein against any attack upon its independence.
8. In 1879 the British Ambassador made representations to the Porte respecting the imposition, by the Turkish authorities at Bussorah, of double taxes on vessels arriving from Bahrein and Muscat on the ground that those places were Turkish ports. He reminded the Porte that His Majesty's Government had never recognized the ports as belonging to Turkey, and protested against the assumption that they were Turkish ports.
9. The Turkish claim to jurisdiction over Bahrein was renewed in 1888, and the Ottoman Government were consequently informed that any attempt to effect a landing at Bahrein would be opposed by force. They were also informed that any claim of the Porte to jurisdiction over the Chief of Bahrein could not be admitted, as Her Majesty's Government regarded him as an independent Ruler, with whom they were in Treaty relations.
10. A question arose in 1892 of the British protection of Bahrein at Bussorah. Acting upon instructions, the British Ambassador at Constantinople addressed a note to the Porte, stating that, as Bahrein was under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen of England, no interference by the Ottoman authorities with natives of that island could be admitted.
11. In the same year (1892) a landing of Turkish troops in the island was apprehended, and the Porte was accordingly informed that such action would be opposed by British ships of war.
12. A further communication was made to the Porte in 1893 on the subject of British protection of Bahrein. This pointed out that the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to recognize the sovereignty of the Sultan over the island had been consistent and undoubted. It went on to say that, having regard to the engagements towards the Chief of Bahrein undertaken by Her Majesty's Government, they must continue to maintain the right of their Diplomatic and Consular Officers in the Ottoman

Empire to give their good offices to any native of Bahrein who might have occasion to apply to them in respect of their dealings with Turkish authorities.

The British Ambassador, speaking subsequently to the Grand Vizier on the same subject, stated that, by virtue of the Convention of 1861, the Sheikh of Bahrein must be regarded as entirely independent of Turkish sovereignty.

In a further despatch, Sir Clare Ford reported that he had informed the Grand Vizier that the claim of the Porte to treat Bahrein as Turkish subjects when in Ottoman territory was inadmissible by Her Majesty's Government, who would extend their protection to natives of Bahrein whenever occasion called for it.

13. It being the reported intention of the Al-bin-Ali tribe to form a settlement at Zohara, with the support of the Turkish Mutessarif of Hasa, the British Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed, in May 1895, to inform the Porte that the formation of such a settlement would constitute a menace to Bahrein. He was also instructed to state that, if the project were proceeded with, the Government of India would be compelled to take measures for the protection of the Chief of that island.

Later in the year, in the course of a further remonstrance addressed to the Porte respecting the action of Turkish officials on the El Katr coast, the statement was reiterated that all Turkish claims to Bahrein, which was under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen of England, were totally inadmissible.

A Memorandum on this subject was communicated to the Turkish Ambassador on the 23rd August, 1895. It was stated therein that Her Majesty's Government did not admit that this part of the coast was under Turkish jurisdiction, but that Bahrein was under British protection, and Her Majesty's Government could not allow any interference with or attack upon it.

In a further Memorandum, communicated to the Turkish Ambassador in the following year, it was re-stated that Bahrein was under British protection, and that the Turkish claim to jurisdiction over that portion of the coast of the Persian Gulf in which Zohara was situated could not be admitted.

14. In February 1896 a *note verbale* was addressed to the Porte by the British Ambassador, requesting the issue of instructions to the Vali of Bussorah to admit the right of the British Consul to intervene on behalf of Bahrein subjects. The note reminded the Porte that the Chief of Bahrein was under the protection of the Queen of England, and it was, therefore, quite inadmissible that the natives of Bahrein should, when on Ottoman territory, be treated as Turkish subjects.

15. Attention was called by the Porte in 1905 to the measures taken against Bahrein for the ill-treatment of a German subject. Lord Lansdowne informed the Turkish Ambassador, in reply to his representations on the subject, that it was a matter of common knowledge, and well known to the Turkish Government, that His Majesty's Government had direct relations with the Sheikh of Bahrein, and that the island and its natives were under British protection. He went on to say that His Majesty's Government were within their rights in taking measures to obtain redress for the outrage committed there.

This statement was repeated later in the year to the Turkish Ambassador, when he was informed that His Majesty's Government must decline to entertain any further representations from the Turkish Government on the subject.

(3.) *Turkish Declarations.*

At an interview, on the 25th April, 1871, between M. Pisani (chief Dragoman to the British Embassy) and the Grand Vizier (Ali Pasha), in reference to a contemplated Turkish Expedition to Nejd, Ali Pasha said the British Ambassador might give the most positive assurances to Her Majesty's Government that the Porte entertained no intention whatever of obtaining the supremacy over Bahrein.

On the 10th December, 1871, an assurance was given, in reference to the Nejd Expedition, by Server Pasha, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, to M. Pisani (first Dragoman of the British Embassy), to the effect that the Sublime Porte had no intention of attacking or obtaining any supremacy over the independent tribes on the coast of the Persian Gulf.

Sir Clare Ford, No. 537, November 19, 1893.

Sir Clare Ford, No. 598, December 26, 1893.

1895.

To Sir P. Currie, No. 206, May 30, 1895; and from ditto, No. 401, June 2, 1895.

Sir P. Currie, No. 520, August 12, 1895.

1895.

To Rustem Pasha, August 23, 1895.

To Anthopoulos Pasha, December 5, 1896.

1896.

Sir P. Currie, No. 141, February 19, 1896.

1905.

To Mr. Townley, No. 59, February 22, 1905.

To Musurus Pasha, May 20, 1905.

1871.

Sir H. Elliot, No. 171, April 26, 1871.

1871.

Sir H. Elliot, No. 122, December 10, 1871.

APPENDIX (B).

Persian Undertakings respecting British Railway Construction in Persia.

BY the Russo-Persian Agreement of the 11th November, 1890, the Persian Government engaged that no railways should be constructed in Persia for ten years, on the termination of which period "the renewal of the Arrangement shall be immediately discussed between the two parties." The term of this engagement is understood to have been since prolonged up to 1910, but the Persian Grand Vizier informed the British Chargé d'Affaires in 1902 that he had intimated to Count Lamsdorff that "Persia would not agree to a further renewal of the Railway Agreement with Russia, which would terminate in 1910."

On the 16th September, 1888, the then Shah (Nasir-ud-din), in an autograph rescript to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave assurances as to British preferential rights in regard to railway construction in Southern Persia in the following terms:—

"Convey these commands to his Excellency the [British] Minister Plenipotentiary. Even give him this very autograph in order that he may keep it and be satisfied that our former promise with regard to the priority of the English Government over others in the construction of a southern railway to Tehran continues to hold good; and certainly, whenever Railway Concessions in the north, &c., are given to others immediately a Concession for a railway from Tehran to Shuster or such a one will be given to the English Company; and, of course, then the clauses and conditions will also be examined in order that it be to our advantage and interest and for the benefit of the commerce of both parties; and positively no southern railway without consultation with the English Government will be granted to any foreign country."

"P.S.—And it is clear that in Persia nobody will be granted permission to construct railways, except it be solely commercial ones. We say so now that they may know it."

On the 4th April, 1900, the British Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran was instructed to remind the Persian Government of this engagement, and to "make sure that the Shah, i.e., Nasir-ud-din's successor, the late Muzaffar-ud-din Shah," was aware of its "existence." Mr. Spring-Rice accordingly communicated a copy of the rescript of 1888 in an official note to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting that it might be laid before the Shah. Both the Grand Vizier, to whom a second copy of the communication was given; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs promised that this should be done at once, and Mr. Spring-Rice subsequently learnt from the Shah's doctor that the matter had been explained to His Majesty, and that the latter had seen the document. On the 11th April, 1900, the British Chargé d'Affaires, at a farewell interview with the Shah, who was about to start for Europe, thought it best not to mention the subject; but, on withdrawing, he was informed orally by the Grand Vizier that the rescript had been laid before the Shah, "who regarded it as of binding force." The Grand Vizier added that for the next ten years the question of concessions would not arise owing to the Russian Railway Agreement, but that if the Russians raised it, the Shah would produce his father's promise to Great Britain. The Minister for Foreign Affairs told Mr. Spring-Rice that this was the answer to his official note.

The Government of India, on the 2nd September, 1907, raised the question of whether the pledges given in 1888 were affected by the recently concluded Anglo-Russian Agreement. The following reply was sent by telegraph on the 25th September, 1907:—

"In the opinion of the Foreign Office, His Majesty's Government would be justified by the wording of the 1888 pledge in asking permission to construct a line in Southern Persia, in the event of Russian Government obtaining a Concession to construct one in the north, though they would clearly be prevented by Anglo-Russian Arrangement regarding Persia from constructing a railway as far as Tehran."

"Our position, both in our own and the neutral spheres, is now stronger than before signature of Convention, as Russian Government have, by the new Arrangement, undertaken not to oppose Concessions supported by His Majesty's Government in British sphere, nor without previous discussion in neutral zone either."

APPENDIX (C).

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[3900]

No. 184.

Sir Edward Grey to the Persian Chargé d'Affaires.

SIR EDWARD GREY presents his compliments to the Persian Chargé d'Affaires, and, in reply to his communication of the 3rd instant, has the honour to communicate the inclosed telegram which has been received from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on the subject of the Turco-Persian frontier dispute.*

Foreign Office, February 12, 1908.

[3634]

No. 185.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 31.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 12, 1908.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 48 of the 28th ultimo relative to proposal that should the Shah take refuge in a foreign Legation he should be protected by a joint Anglo-Russian guard.

I concur in the view expressed by you that difficulties might arise owing to the possible refusal of a foreign Legation to accept an Anglo-Russian guard.

It appears to me that the matter is one which had best be left to the discretion of the British and Russian Representatives at Tehran, and I have to request your Excellency to propose to M. Isvolsky that instructions be sent to the former, authorizing them, in the event of the circumstances contemplated arising, to offer to furnish the guards should they think the offer likely to be accepted, and should they consider the step necessary for the Shah's safety.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[3900]

No. 186.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 33.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 12, 1908.

I TRANSMIT herewith copy of a communication which has been received from the Persian Chargé d'Affaires at this Court relative to the Turco-Persian frontier dispute.†

This communication appears to have been addressed to all the Powers, and I should be glad if your Excellency would ascertain what view the Russian Government take of the action of the Persian Government in this respect.

You should at the same time inform the Russian Government that His Majesty's Government are much impressed by the news which reaches them of the preparations

* No. 144.

† No. 156.

which the Turks are making for still larger operations than those hitherto carried out, that the situation seems to grow daily more serious and threatening, and that they are ready to consider, with a view to supporting it if possible, any action which the Russian Government may suggest.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[2396]

No. 187.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 12, 1908.*
SIR E. GREY observes in a report from the Officer in Command of His Majesty's ship "Hyacinth," dated the 25th December, 1907, respecting the capture of the Dayir pirates, a copy of which he understands was also communicated to the India Office, that Captain Hickley, the officer who effected the capture, states that he informed the Khan of Bander Rig that he would bring his good services to the favourable notice of the British and Persian Governments.

I am directed to state that Sir E. Grey proposes, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Secretary Morley, to instruct His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran to express to the Persian Government the appreciation of His Majesty's Government of the services rendered by the Khan, and I am to inquire whether Mr. Morley would be disposed to instruct the Government of India to make him a small present as a reward for his co-operation.

I am to inclose a copy of a letter which has been addressed to the Admiralty, expressing Sir E. Grey's appreciation of the efficient manner in which the capture of the pirates was effected by Captain Hickley.

Major Cox appears to have given valuable assistance in the matter, and Mr. Morley will doubtless give instructions for his proceedings to be approved.

With regard to the closing of Muscat to Afghans, it is presumed that a communication will be addressed to the British India Steam Navigation Company as recommended by Captain Hickley.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[2396]

No. 188.

Foreign Office to Admiralty.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 12, 1908.*
I LAID before Secretary Sir E. Grey your letter of the 25th, forwarding a report respecting the recent capture of pirates at Dayir by His Majesty's ship "Highflyer."

I am directed to request you to express to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty Sir E. Grey's satisfaction at the prompt and efficient manner in which the capture was effected by Captain Hickley.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[5064]

No. 189.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 41.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, February 13, 1908.*
FOLLOWING from Mr. Wratislaw, Urumia, No. 16 of the 13th instant:—

"With reference to my telegram of the 7th instant. After enumerating the Treaties which confirm that of 1639, the Turkish Memorandum declares that the interference of Persian officials in Kurdistan, from Bayazid to the extreme frontier of Suleimanieh, is founded on no right. It says that the Kurds have now returned to their old allegiance to the Sultan, and implies that the whole of the above-mentioned district belongs to Turkey.

"The Persian Commission, on the other hand, take their stand on the Treaty of Erzeroum, Article III of which excludes any demand for the cession of territory, except in the cases provided for in Article II.

"Even at this early stage a deadlock seems possible, as neither side seems disposed to abandon its position.

"I am told by Taher Pasha that he has received a letter from the Turkish General who went to Soujboulak, saying that he only did so to help the Persian Governor-General."

[5051]

No. 190.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 44.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 13, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph line.

I am telegraphically informed by His Majesty's Consul, Seistan, that, though hitherto English, Russian, and Persian operators on the Seistan line have shared one office, the Russian Acting Consul at Birjand is demanding a special room, which can be locked, wherein to install a new tape instrument which he is expecting.

Major Kennion points out that though, when we acquire Russian rights, the privilege of a separate room would be valuable, yet this would now be a disturbance of the *status quo*, which, pending the exchange of lines, ought presumably to be maintained.

The following explanation of the incident is given by M. de Hartwig:—

He was recently informed by the Russian Consul-General at Meshed that, for the improvement and upkeep of the line, certain materials must be supplied. M. de Hartwig's reply was that only sufficient for the Meshed-Khaf section should be sent. The Telegraph Head-quarters at Tiflis, to whom this instruction was sent, asked why the line south of Khaf was not to be included, pointing out that communication might be interrupted if the repairs which this section also required were not executed. The Minister had replied that the Telegraph Administration would be informed in due course of the reason, which was a political one. M. de Hartwig says that the Russian Consuls do not know of the Agreement respecting the exchange of lines. He has reported this case to St. Petersburg, and presumes that the new instrument has been sent as part of the alleged repairing material, sent perhaps in spite of his orders.

What reply shall I make to Major Kennion's request for instructions?

It would perhaps be desirable to allow the acquisition of the special room, if it is clearly agreed with the Russian Government that all Russian employés are to be withdrawn, and that Russia will not maintain signallers attached to Consulates as we do at present, which, I presume, will be arranged when the change is effected.

[4512]

No. 191.

Foreign Office to Mr. J. Preece.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 13, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to inform you that he has received a telegram dated the 8th instant from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, giving the substance of reports furnished by His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz relative to the situation in Arabistan.

It appears from this telegram that all has been quiet in the oil camps for the past two months, an improvement in the situation which Captain Lorimer attributes to apprehension aroused in the minds of the Bakhtiari Chiefs. A partial and temporary improvement was made in the Bakhtiari guards but they are still deficient in numbers. The Khans profess ignorance of, and disavow, the action taken at His Majesty's Legation at Tehran by their agents last November. Captain Lorimer has advised the Oil Syndicate's Manager to arrange as usual for the payment of the instalment due in February and ask for leave to order the suspended instalment, which fell due in November, to be paid so soon as he considers that the right moment to do so has arrived. He is endeavouring in the first place to secure a settlement of the compensation claims.

[1563]

Mr. Marling expresses the opinion that the most satisfactory solution of the difficulty with regard to the guards would be their payment by their Syndicate direct, and he has accordingly suggested to Captain Lorimer that he should use his opportunity to induce the Khans to grant the necessary permission.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[4508]

No. 192.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 13, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decyphers of telegrams from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran and Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the subject of telegraph lines in Persia.*

As regards Mr. Marling's earlier telegram, I am to request you to call the attention of Mr. Secretary Morley to the inquiry contained in the last paragraph as to the Department by which it is desired that the obligations now discharged by the Russian Telegraph Administration should be taken over.

As regards his later telegram, I am to state that it appears to Sir E. Grey that the exchange of Memoranda referred to constitutes a sufficiently definite record of the arrangement by which the rights now enjoyed by Great Britain over the Tehran-Khanikin line are ceded to Russia, and that any further formality in this respect is unnecessary. He would accordingly propose, if Mr. Morley concurs in this view, to reply in that sense to Mr. Marling's inquiry.

I am further to state that, in Sir E. Grey's opinion, the terms of the Memorandum communicated by His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 23rd June last make it abundantly clear that His Majesty's Government surrender their rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line in consideration of a promise on the part of the Russian Government that they will not oppose the prolongation of the British Concessions for the telegraph lines from Jask to Bushire and from Jask to Gwaddur, and of the Central Persian telegraph line to Robat.

It is for His Majesty's Government to judge of the moment at which it would be opportune to apply to the Persian Government for the prolongation of these Concessions, and they can hardly insist on the grant of this prolongation being simultaneous with the transfer to Russia of their rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line. All therefore that remains to be done at present is for the Russian Government to obtain from that of Persia their recognition of the transfer of those rights. Sir E. Grey proposes, subject to Mr. Morley's concurrence, to telegraph to Mr. Marling in this sense.

As regards Sir A. Nicolson's telegram, I am to inquire Mr. Morley's opinion of the desirability of making to the Persian Government an explanation in the sense proposed by M. Isvolsky, and I am to ask whether he sees any objection to Sir A. Nicolson's making to his Excellency the communication which he suggests. Should Mr. Morley see none, I am to request that Sir E. Grey may be supplied with copies of the two Conventions referred to for communication to M. Isvolsky.

Sir E. Grey agrees with Sir A. Nicolson in considering that it would be more convenient to deal with the question of the exchange of the Meshed-Seistan and the Tehran-Meshed lines separately from that of the cession of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line, and, if Mr. Morley concurs in this opinion, would propose to authorize his Excellency to make to M. Isvolsky a suggestion in that sense.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[5183]

No. 193.

Major Cox to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 14.)

(Telegraphic.)

Bushire, February 14, 1908.

I AM certain that British interests in Southern Persia and the Gulf would benefit if the new British Minister were to arrive by way of Bushire.

This course I had urged on Sir C. Spring-Rice before I knew that he would not return.

[4756]

No. 194.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 14, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* inquiring as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government regarding the retention at Shiraz of the sowars of the Consular guard who should have been relieved last November, and urging that some arrangement of a more permanent character should be made.

I am to request that Sir E. Grey may be furnished with any observations which Mr. Secretary Morley may have to offer on this telegram.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[5384]

No. 195.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 15.)

(No. 45.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 15, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. My despatch No. 29 of the 14th instant.

Consul at Kermanshah had received information that military preparations were being made by Turks against Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh. Consul-General at Bagdad reports, however, that there is no confirmation of anything serious being on foot.

[5064]

No. 196.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 31.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 15, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I have received Urumia telegram No. 16 of the 13th instant.

I should like to know exact extent of Turkish claim. Can you ascertain this?

[5051]

No. 197.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 15, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,† relative to certain improvements which the Russian Telegraph Administration propose to effect on the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line.

In view of the satisfactory attitude adopted by the Russian Minister at Tehran with reference to this incident, and of the fact that he has reported the case to St. Petersburg, Sir E. Grey is disposed, if Mr. Secretary Morley concurs, to defer compliance with Mr. Marling's request for instructions until His Majesty's Government

are in possession of the official explanation which the Russian Government may be expected shortly to furnish to Sir A. Nicolson.

In the meanwhile Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive any observations which Mr. Morley may have to offer on the facts reported in Mr. Marling's telegram.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[5417]

No. 198.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey—(Received February 17.)

(No. 7.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 21, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 223 of the 9th October last, I venture to inquire whether any decision has been reached as to the permanency of the appointment of Military Attaché at Meshed. I have seen no reason to alter the opinion which I ventured to express in my above-mentioned despatch that the post should not be abolished, and His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed informs me that he entirely agrees in that view.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[5419]

No. 199.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey—(Received February 17.)

(No. 9.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 21, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter written to Mr. Acting Consul-General Stevens by an Armenian friend who was in Saoujboulak about the middle of December, and also an English abstract of a very lengthy and confused note from the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs respecting recent events in Saoujboulak.

The Turkish Commander, called Fariq Pasha in the former document, is obviously the same as Mohammed Fazl Pasha, "Fetik" (Major-General), the writer having mistaken the title "Fetik" for a name, while Bayis Agha and Bayazid Agha seem also to indicate the same person.

From various conversations that I have had with the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, it appears quite certain that on or about the 21st instant Firman Firma was partially surrounded by Kurdish tribes on the north, west, south, and south-east of Saoujboulak, but at that date his communications with Miandoab were still open, as the telegraph line was still open, and, so far as was known, the postal service was still working.

The Persian Government are very anxious as to his position, and are straining every nerve to send him reinforcements and supplies of all kinds, of which he reports himself to be in dire need.

I would venture to point out that the longer the Turks are suffered to advance and occupy Persian territory, the more difficult it will be to persuade them to give way, for to retire from the occupied districts after assuring the inhabitants that they have come to stay would be exceedingly damaging to Turkish prestige on the western side of the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 199.

M. Melik-Vartanian to Acting Consul-General Stevens.

My dear Sir,

Saoujboulak, December 19, 1907.

PERMIT me to send some news about the state of affairs in this city and in the surrounding country. In the first place, the Governor (Hadji Samet Khan, Serdar-i-Muktadir) has left this city nine days ago, and the city is, if not really,

apparently in the hands of the Turks. The reasons of the Governor for leaving the city are as follows:—

A few of the Kurdish Aghas having personal grievance against the Persian Government went and begged Fariq Pasha (the Commander of the Turkish army on the Turko-Persian border) to accept them as Turkish subjects. Fariq Pasha accepted their offer and recognized them as subjects of the Sultan, and he encouraged them to try to persuade the rest of the Kurdish Aghas to follow their example. Some of the Aghas followed and submitted to the Turks out of fear, while others refused to be disloyal to the Shah. Those who remained loyal suffered great loss in person, wealth, and property. Among those Aghas who had transferred their loyalty from the Persians to the Turks was Bayis Agha. Bayis Agha was given the title of "Pasha," and was sent by Fariq to loot the villages of the Aghas who had refused to submit to the Turks. Bayis came with 600 horsemen and began to carry away the cattle and sheep of the villages belonging to the Aghas who had remained loyal to Persia. They sent and begged for help and protection from Serdar-i-Muktadir against Bayis Agha. Serdar sent 200 troops with two cannon, but before the arrival of the troops all the Aghas, including Serdar-i-Mukri (who was in Tabreez only two weeks ago, and who was the Hakim of Saoujboulak before Serdar-i-Muktadir came as Hakim), had submitted to Bayis Agha and had promised loyalty to the Turks. On hearing this fact the Serdar became alarmed, and ordered the troops to return, and on Tuesday, the 10th December, at 8 P.M., he sent away to Miandoab his three wives, together with other Persian women and children, and on the next day, at 8:30 A.M., he himself departed from the city with 3,000 infantry and 700 Chardowlah horsemen. On the day of the departure of Serdar, the Sheikh-ul-Islam and 250 other Notables of the city went out on horseback to Pasva, five hours' ride from here, to see Fariq Pasha, the Turkish Commander, and offer him the Governorship of the city. The answer of Fariq has been: "I accept you as subjects of the Sultan, but cannot come to Saoujboulak without the permission of the Sublime Porte. I will telegraph your wishes to the Sultan and will let you know in four days." The day after the citizens returned, five zaptiehs arrived here on mules, sent by Fariq Pasha, apparently for the protection of the Turkish Consulate here, but really for the occupation of the city in the name of the Sultan; in the meantime Bayis Agha, whom the Fariq Pasha had sent out to persuade the Kurd Aghas to submit to the Turks, was gathering immense wealth by looting them and demanding tribute in the name of Fariq Pasha. The tributes consisted of horses, German Mauser rifles, cartridges, and cash money. Two days after he came intending to enter the city, but the citizens would not permit him to enter and loot the city. He went again to Pasva, where Fariq resides.

Last night the Shahbender (Turkish Consul here) ordered both the Customs officers and the Karguzar to leave the city, and they left this morning with their families. This evening (19th December) arrived here fifteen Turkish soldiers with two officers, and were lodged in the customs buildings, and were lodged in the customs building, vacated this morning by the Persians. To-morrow will arrive two regiments of Turkish soldiers; the officers will be given quarters in the customs building, while the soldiers are to be lodged in the barracks. At the present time the Turkish Consul is the real Governor of the city, and he looks after all the affairs of the city, and his stable is full of prisoners.

Baper Agha Mangoor remained loyal to Persia to the last, and went to Miandoab with Serdar Muktadir. He has 80 horsemen and, counting women and children, about 300 followers.

Further news, if you wish to have, will be sent to you, and if you care to have a British Consular Representative here, I would be willing to act as one.

I am, &c.
(Signed) H. D. MELIK-VARTANIAN, M.D.C.M.

Inclosure 2 in No. 199.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Abstract.)

January 19, 1908.

AS the unruly Persian tribes, by the instigation and threats of Bayazid Agra, a Persian refugee, who is supported by the Turkish authorities, had proceeded to acts of violence, murder and plunder to the villages and the town of Saoujboulak and forced the Refat-ul-Vezareh, the Persian Foreign Office agent, to leave the place, his

Highness the Firman Firma proceeded thither to punish the rebellious tribes, to restore order and tranquillity in the district. On his Highness' arrival at Miandoab, January 1st, Mohammed Fazl Fasha Farik wrote to him from Pasva stating that his Highness' advance to Saoujboulak with troops might excite the tribes and lead to fights, and in that case the Turks would not be responsible. The Firman Firma wrote in reply that the refugee, Bayazid Agha, who is plundering on the Persian frontier, has collected some of the Mankur and Turkish tribes, proceeded to the house of Mohammed Hussein Khan Sardar, a Persian official of high rank, threatened him with death, and asked him to allow Turkish interference. The Firman Firma also added that the property of Persian subjects at Saoujboulak had been plundered and damaged; and that he was going there to restore order on the frontier in a manner suited to the friendship existing between the two countries, and asked the Turkish officials to prevent any untoward incident between the tribes of the two countries, in which case the responsibility would rest with the Turkish frontier authorities.

When the Turks were informed of the Firman Firma's departure for Saoujboulak, they sent the Mamesh tribes of Persia, with a large number of horsemen, to a point about three miles from Miandoab, to cut off all communication between that place and Saoujboulak. Private boxes, a sum of 7,000 tomans in cash, a large amount of property belonging to Shalisevens, and some provisions going from Miandoab to Saoujboulak were seized. The chiefs of the village of Mokri were told that they must proceed, by the orders of Farik Pasha, to the neighbourhood of Miandoab and plunder the place and cut off the communication between that place and Saoujboulak; otherwise they would be put to death. They, accompanied by 1,000 Mamesh and Mankur horse, acted accordingly, and carried off camels and cattle to the amount of 300,000 tomans, and killed 70 men. Besides these, 600 camels, going from Saoujboulak to bring provisions, were seized, and six horsemen who accompanied them were disarmed by the Mamesh tribesmen and the men are now missing.

As the perpetrators had often said that they were acting under the orders of Farik Pasha, the Firman Firma informed him of this in his letter and requested him to instruct the Turkish frontier authorities not to allow the beasts carried off by the tribes to cross the frontier, as some of them may belong to Russian subjects.

Instead of punishing the murderers and brigands and preventing the recurrence of these deplorable events, Farik Pasha has written in reply to the Firman Firma suggesting to him that in order to prevent any religious conflict between the Moslems he should return to Miandoab.

By the laws of nations a military officer of one country has no right to propose to the local Governor of another, who is trying to restore order in his district, to return to another place, and, moreover, try to renew the religious disputes, which have been abandoned for many years, while there is harmony between the two sects of Islam.

According to the telegraphic reports received, Bayazid Agha and the Chiefs of the rebellious tribes have notified to the Sheik-ul-Islam and the inhabitants of Saoujboulak that Emin Effendi, at the head of Government troops and a large quantity of arms and ammunition, is prepared, and that they must turn the Firman Firma out of the place. On the other hand, Bayazid Agha, by the order of the Turkish authorities, has encouraged the Persian tribes, amounting to over 10,000 men to besiege Saoujboulak. They all say that they are acting under the orders of the Turkish Government, and they have plundered Persian villages, murdered people, fired on Firman Firma's men, wounded his cousin the Said-us-Sultan, and killed and wounded between thirty and forty of his men. Persians have been obliged to defend themselves, and, consequently, a large number of men have been killed on either side.

The Turkish officials are trying to cause such hostility amongst the tribes that may lead to difficulties.

I have therefore thought it necessary to inform you of the facts and to request you to be so good as to bring the matter to the notice of the British Government, so that the British Ambassador may be instructed to inform the Porte of the misbehaviour of the Turkish officials in encouraging the mischief, and to co-operate with the Persian Ambassador in stopping the evils.

[5420]

No. 200.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 24, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 9 of the 21st instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw, reporting on the situation on the Turco-Persian frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 200.

Consul-General Wratislaw to Mr. Marling.

(No. 30.)

Sir,

Urmi, December 28, 1907.

THE state of things along the frontier has for some time past been going from bad to worse. The Salmas-Urmi section of the main caravan road from Khoi is now most unsafe, and there is a large accumulation of merchandize at Salmas which cannot be brought on to its destination here, as the camel drivers refuse to run the gauntlet of the Shekoik Kurds of Somai. The latter not only infest the roads, but carry on their depredations with impunity amongst the villages in the north of the Urmi and the south of the Salmas district. Many thousands of sheep have thus been stolen by them during the months of November and December, and the loss to the villages in Anzel belonging to one single proprietor is estimated at over 3,000/.

With the arrival of Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh it is expected that measures will be taken to guard the road; but to afford efficient protection to the whole district is quite beyond the present capacity of the Persian authorities. Even were funds and troops available for a punitive expedition to Somai, the results of Majd-es-Sultaneh's campaign in Dasht were too disastrous for the idea of risking a repetition of them to be entertained for a moment, and the position of these Kurds, inhabiting as they do a district claimed by the Turks though not yet occupied by them, is for the moment impregnable.

In the town of Urmi itself there has been no disorder since the expulsion of the Governor. The effete and bibulous old gentleman, a resident of the town, who was gratified with the title of Acting Governor some time after Imam Kuli's departure, takes no share in the administration. The Government, such as it is, is in the hands of the President of the Enjumen, the Karguzar, and the Chief Fedais, the latter being the real masters of the situation. Until they begin to quarrel among themselves, a not improbable contingency, there seems no prospect of disturbances.

To the south things are even worse than in the north, so far at least as is known here, for communications are almost entirely suspended. Not only has the adventurous traveller to reckon with numerous bands of marauding Kurds, but he must also expect to be fired on at sight by the inhabitants of any village he approaches, who in these troublous times regard all strangers as enemies. The Plain of Urmi, which is in great part given up to the cultivation of grapes to be exported in the shape of raisins, does not produce sufficient grain for the needs of the population, and has hitherto been in part supplied from Solduz and Soujboulak. These sources have now been cut off, and the prices of wheat and barley are rising rapidly in consequence.

The case of the Karapapaks of Solduz is a hard one. They emigrated to Persia from the neighbourhood of Erivan when the district they inhabited was ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Turkmanchai, and were settled in Solduz by the Persian Government. In return for keeping 400 armed horsemen at the service of the Government they were exempted from all taxes, and they have always been regarded as a body on which the Shah could rely as a sort of local gendarmerie as well as auxiliaries to his army in times of emergency. Recently their district became the object of persistent attacks on the part of Mamesh Kurds under the command of Hamza Seimen, brother of Mehmet Agha. This personage had hitherto been on very friendly terms with them, but in reply to their remonstrances he informed them that

he had been ordered by Mahommed Fazil Pasha, the officer commanding the Turkish troops at Paswah, to do his utmost to harass them in every possible way. He regretted the order, but was obliged to obey it. At the same time he advised them to apply to the Pasha. The Karapapaks accordingly sent a deputation to Paswah to beg the Pasha to let them alone.

They were kindly received, but were told that they had only two alternatives, either to give up their arms and emigrate in the spring, or to adhere to the Turks. The Pasha strongly advised them to choose the latter, as the whole country on both sides of them was passing under the Sultan's dominion, and they could not expect to be an exception to the general rule.

The deputation returned to Solduz, and after much deliberation, the Karapapaks came to the conclusion that, as it was out of the question for them to disarm, the only escape from their present intolerable situation was to accept the second alternative. When their decision was communicated to Mahommed Fazil Pasha he directed them to prepare a letter to him, signed by the chief men in each village, making their submission, and requesting that they might be accorded Turkish nationality. This was done; the Pasha informed them that their Petition was granted, and within two days all attacks of the Kurds ceased.

The Karapapaks were strictly enjoined to hold no communication with the Persian Government, but they have written a letter to Ferman Ferma, the Governor-General of Azerbaijan, to explain the circumstances of their secession, which letter was brought here last week for transmission to Tabreez.

From Soujboulak it is very difficult to get any news at all. All that is known here is that the Mangour Kurds under Baizagha occupied the town after its evacuation by the Persian Governor, whom they followed up some distance to the east in the direction of Miandoab. The inhabitants of the town, almost entirely Sunnis of Kurdish extraction, have in their turn presented a Petition to Mahommed Fazil Pasha begging for Turkish nationality, which was forwarded to Constantinople for the Sultan's decision. The occupation of Soujboulak seems to have been effected by Kurds alone, but it is understood here that a small body of Turkish soldiers subsequently joined them.

The Turkish troops in Tergavar and Baradost are in a pitiable condition: badly clothed, badly fed, and suffering from typhoid and influenza. They are gradually tearing down the Christians' deserted houses in Mawana and Korana in order to use the woodwork for fuel, and the few remaining Christians have almost all left, as they found it impossible to satisfy the demands made on them for food and fodder. Colonel Yaver Bey, who commands at Mawana, informed Mr. Stevens a few days ago that a fresh battalion was expected from Van shortly, but I have not yet heard of its arrival.

The pro-Turkish movement in the town and district of Urmi appears to have been checked for the moment by the arrival of Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh, from whom the credulous population expect great things. In the town the movement was engineered by certain Sunni residents, who secretly incited people to give in their names to the Turkish Consular Agent or to Colonel Yaver Bey as candidates for Turkish protection. The villagers were induced to do the same thing by sheer desperation. Should, as is more than probable, Muhteshem-es-Sultaneh's mission prove unsuccessful and the aggressions of the Kurds continue, there are likely to be fresh developments in this direction, as the policy of the Turks seems to be to obtain invitations from the population in order to justify their occupation of districts outside the identic zone. Mohammed Fazil Pasha informed the Karapapak deputation that the town of Urmi had hitherto been left untouched "because there were too many foreigners in it," but that the lot of the inhabitants would be rendered so unbearable that they would be eventually forced to solicit Turkish intervention.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. C. WRATISLAW.

[5421]

No. 201.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 11.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 25, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith, in case you should think it desirable to take any action in the matter, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, reporting on the circumstances in which certain native boats are now plying in the Persian Gulf under the German flag.

I have, &c.

(For His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires),

(Signed) R. G. VANSITTART.

Inclosure 1 in No. 201.

Major Cox to Mr. Marling.

(No. 98.)

Sir,

Bushire, December 22, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith, for your information, a copy of a despatch which I have addressed to the Government of India in the foreign Department, reporting the circumstances under which three native vessels with head-quarters at Lingah are now sailing under the German flag.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

P. Z. COX, Major, British Resident in the Persian Gulf and His Britannic Majesty's Consul-General for Fars, &c.

Inclosure 2 in No. 201.

Major Cox to the Government of India.

Sir,

Bushire, December 22, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to report, on information received from the Residency Agent at Lingah, the circumstances under which three native vessels with head-quarters at Lingah are now sailing under the German flag.

2. At the end of August last the Agent reported that Messrs. Wöckhaus and Co. had started bringing mother-o'-pearl according to their practice, and were said to intend purchasing more extensively than usual this season. To this end two large native craft of the "boom" type and one "sambookh" were being used for communicating with the pearling fleets and for the transport of shells, and were being sailed under the German flag.

Asked for further details, the Agent explained that one Amin-bin-Ali Amin, a native of Kangoon, on the Persian Coast, but for some time past residing in Lingah, had been provided with funds by Mr. Wöckhaus, and, having proceeded therewith to Koweit, had purchased two native craft of the "boom" pattern. He had come to an arrangement with the German firm under which he was to act as their buyer of shells, and, in addition to the cost price paid by him on behalf of his principals, the latter undertook to credit his account with an extra percentage which would form a book credit against the money advanced for the purchase of the "booms," and as soon as the latter had been wiped off the vessels would become Amin-bin-Ali's own property.

The Agent further reported that two registration certificates for these craft had been obtained by Mr. Wöckhaus from the German Consulate at Bushire, and that the vessels were plying to and from the pearl banks and islands, towards the end of the season, under the German flag. Our Agent continued that the third boat, the

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"sambookh," was Amin-bin-Ali's own property, and had been in his possession three years; it now flew the German flag, and was employed in the same way as the two "booms."

The crews of all the three are furnished by Amin-bin-Ali, and according to the Residency Agent "the German Company protects Amin and the crews of the vessels." Certain information asked for as to whether any of the natives employed are divers, or whether they have yet done any diving, is not as yet forthcoming.

3. Now that the pearl season of 1907 is over and winter arrived, the two "booms" are being employed on voyages to Muscat and Debai, and the third vessel has gone to the Malabar Coast for spars and rafters—all under the German flag.

4. I have instructed the Residency Agent to endeavour to obtain copies of the certificates granted, and other information likely to indicate whether or not the grant of the flags is compatible with the provisions of the Brussels Act, and I will report further on hearing from him. Meanwhile, as the fact of the grant has been mentioned recently in a recent commercial report, I have thought it advisable not to delay submission of the information at present available. As the papers have presumably been issued some three months ago, perhaps His Majesty's Government will consider the expediency of obtaining from the International Bureau under the Brussels Act copies of the authorization granted by the German Consular authorities, which should by this time have been deposited in accordance with paragraph 3, Article XIII, of the Act.

A copy of this letter has been forwarded to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran, for information, under my No. 98 of to-day's date.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major, British Resident in the
Persian Gulf and His Britannic Majesty's
Consul-General for Fars, &c.

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No. 202.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 12.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 27, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith a revised copy of Messrs. Lynch's construction accounts with the Bakhtiari Khans, and I venture to trouble you with a brief explanation of the circumstances which have rendered their revision necessary.

The account previously made out by the Legation, copy of which was forwarded to you in Sir C. Spring-Rice's despatch No. 211 of the 17th September, 1907, was posted to Captain Lorimer at Ispahan, but failed to reach him before his departure, which, as you will recollect, Sir, was unexpectedly accelerated by the alarming reports of the situation in which the employés of the Oil Syndicate were placed at Batwand, and the urgent need for his presence at that place.

Captain Lorimer, unwilling to lose the opportunity offered by his passage through the Bakhtiari country to present the claims to the Khans, himself made out, with the assistance of Mr. Wright, of the Imperial Bank of Persia at Ispahan, an account on the lines that had been sanctioned by your telegram No. 92 of the 12th August, 1907, and undertook responsibility for any corrections that might subsequently be found necessary. When it was found that a discrepancy of some 13,000 krans existed between his version and that of the Legation, which eventually reached him at Ahwaz, he pointed out with justice that the Legation account should have been made out, like his own, on a toman basis, as previously laid down, and also because it was futile to attempt to make the Khans understand an account on a sterling basis.

I accordingly caused the Legation account to be remodelled on a toman basis, and the claim thus exceeds by about 900 krans that presented by Captain Lorimer, in which some slight errors were detected. Captain Lorimer has been instructed to notify this modification to the Khans and to present the revised claim, copy of which has been forwarded to him. The discrepancy in the claim now transmitted and that forwarded in Sir C. Spring-Rice's despatch above mentioned is due in part to the fluctuations of exchange and the high rates prevailing at the time when the Khans' payments on account were made, and also to the fact that twenty-five annual instal-

ments of 1,100 tomans still leave, at the end of that period, a balance against the Khans of 2,750 tomans for the completion of the sum of 30,000 tomans, which was fixed upon as the arbitrary equivalent of 5,500L. It should also be borne in mind that the amount now claimed in krans represents a considerable larger sum in sterling than formerly owing to the fall in exchange.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 202.

ACCOUNT of the Persian Transport Company (Limited) with the Bakhtiari Khans in respect of the Ahwaz-Ispahan Road.

Dr.				PAID BY THE KHANS.				Cr.
DUE BY THE KHANS.								
1901.		Krans.	Krans.	1903.		Krans.	Krans.	
Mar. 3 ..	To first instalment due at this date	11,000·00		July 23 ..	By cash into Bank at Ispahan	15,000·00		
	Interest on 300,000 krans at 6 per cent. for				Interest to March 3, 1904, 223 days at 6 per cent.	549·85		
	one year	18,000·00	29,000·00	Sept. 1 ..	By cash into Bank at Ispahan	25,000·00		
1902.					Interest to March 3, 1904, 183 days at 6 per cent.	752·05		
Mar. 3 ..	To interest on arrears, 29,000 krans at 6 per cent. for		1,740·00	Nov. 9 ..	By cash into Bank at Ispahan	10,000·00		
	one year		30,740·00		Interest to March 3, 1904, 114 days at 6 per cent.	187·40	51,489·30	
	Second instalment due at this date	11,000·00		1905.				
	Interest on 289,000 krans at 6 per cent. for	17,340·00	28,340·00	Mar. 3 ..	By interest on 51,489·30 krans for one year at 6 per		3,089·35	
	one year		59,080·00		cent.			
1903.				1904.				
Mar. 3 ..	To interest on arrears, 59,080 krans at 6 per cent. for		3,544·80	May 31 ..	By cash per His Britannic Majesty's Legation, 742l.	40,439·00		
	one year		62,624·80		at 54·50 krans			
	Third instalment due at this date	11,000·00			Interest on 40,439 krans to March 2, 1905,	1,828·05		
	Interest on 278,000 krans at 6 per cent. for	16,680·00	27,680·00	Sept. 6 ..	275 days at 6 per cent.			
	one year		90,804·80		By cash into Bank at Ispahan	30,300·00		
1904.					Interest to March 2, 1905, 177 days at 6 per cent.	881·60	73,448·65	
Mar. 3 ..	To interest on arrears, 90,804·80 krans at 6 per cent.		5,418·30	1905.				
	for one year		95,723·10	Nov. 11 ..	By cash into Bank at Ispahan	27,283·25		
	Fourth instalment due at this date	11,000·00			Interest to March 2, 1906, 111 days at 6 per cent.	497·85		
	Interest on 267,000 krans at 6 per cent. for	16,020·00	27,020·00		Interest on 128,027·30 krans to March 2, 1906, for	7,681·65	35,462·75	
	one year		122,743·10		one year at 6 per cent.		163,490·05	
				1906.				
				Dec. 11 ..	By cash into Bank at Ispahan	25,000·00		
					Interest to March 2, 1907, 81 days at 6 per cent.	332·85		

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1905.					Interest on 163,490·05 krans to March 2, 1907, for	9,809·40	35,142·25	
Mar. 3 ..	To interest on arrears, 122,743·10 krans at 6 per		7,364·60		one year at 6 per cent.			
	cent. for one year		130,107·70				198,632·30	
	Fifth instalment due at this date	11,000·00			By balance due from Khans at March 3, 1907 ..		29,456·80	
	Interest on 256,000 krans at 6 per cent. for	15,360·00	26,360·00					
	one year		156,467·70					
1906.								
Mar. 3 ..	To interest on arrears, 156,467·70 krans at 6 per		9,388·05					
	cent. for one year		165,855·75					
	Sixth instalment due at this date	11,000·00						
	Interest on 245,000 krans at 6 per cent. for	14,700·00	25,700·00					
	one year		191,555·75					
1907.								
Mar. 3 ..	To interest on arrears, 191,555·75 krans at 6 per		11,493·35					
	cent. for one year		203,049·10					
	Seventh instalment due at this date	11,000·00						
	Interest on 234,000 krans at 6 per cent. for	14,040·00	25,040·00					
	one year		228,089·10				228,089·10	

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No. 203.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 13.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 29, 1908.

THE German Chargé d'Affaires called on me on the 15th instant, and tried to draw me into a discussion on the financial position of Persia.

He said that he agreed with the general Persian opinion that a foreign loan was absolutely necessary. Such an operation, however, must be exceedingly difficult in the present state of international finance. France was the only country where it would be possible, and the French Government would probably consult His Majesty's Government on the point. I said that I had no knowledge of what His Majesty's Government's views on the subject would be, but I could hardly think they would be eager to advance money to Persia themselves, as Persia could offer no reasonable security, but in any case Russia must have the decisive word in the question. Baron von Richthofen agreed, and said that, even supposing a loan could be raised and security found for it, he supposed that the lenders, whether an International Syndicate or a foreign Government, would insist on conditions insuring that the money was properly used. I said that this consideration had occurred to me, but I doubted whether the Persian Government would ever consent to anything really effective, and thought that it would be a great obstacle to the conclusion of a foreign loan.

Baron von Richthofen said he thought it could and would be easily overcome, and went on to talk as though an international board of financial control was unavoidable.

He informed me that Herr Gutmann's return to Persia at an early date was by no means certain, and that there was no intention of opening the German Bank so long as the present political uncertainty continued.

On the 20th Mushir-ed-Dowleh called on me, and, after some conversation on general subjects, said that it was now commonly recognized that a foreign loan was imperative, and it was hoped that the operation could be effected with an International Syndicate to be formed in Paris on an entirely non-political basis. The wish was to raise a sufficient sum to consolidate the whole of Persia's indebtedness, both external and internal, amounting to about 52,000,000 roubles (5,200,000*l.*), and to provide a substantial amount over and above this wherewith to reorganize the general administration, and in particular the collection and readjustment of internal taxation. For these purposes the Persian Government could offer as guarantee the revenues of the customs, amounting last year to about 620,000*l.*, and it was hoped that on this security a loan of 7,000,000*l.* could be procured. He recognized, of course, that the scheme must depend on the good-will of Russia and Great Britain, but he would like to know what I thought of it. I said that any such transaction must, of course, depend on the consent of Russia and Great Britain, but, supposing that that was obtained, I doubted whether any financial group in the world would advance so large a sum as his Excellency had mentioned, as the amount of the revenues to be pledged for its service was only just large enough for the purpose, and left no margin of security; and, in the second place, I thought it likely that, considering the use to which earlier foreign loans had been put in Persia, that some right of supervision of the expenditure of the money would be required. If the loan were to be an ordinary financial operation—an "international" transaction, as his Excellency expressed it—it seemed to me that this would bring Persia perilously near to international financial control. This I knew was what Germany was aiming at—in fact, Baron von Richthofen already looked upon the establishment of a "Caisse de la Dette" as inevitable, and I had no doubt that the suggestion of an "international commercial" loan came from him, with the sole object of bringing it about. Control of that kind would be very distasteful to Persia, and was, I thought, unnecessary. The financial adviser would be able to indicate the objects to which any loan should be put, and a staff of European inspectors would guarantee that those objects were being really carried out. They would also be valuable in giving Persians the instruction in administrative matters which was so badly required.

I thought also that a loan effected in the open market might prove to have disadvantages, as in case of a temporary inability of the Persian Government to meet its engagements the bondholders would be much more insistent in demanding their strict rights and exacting their pound of flesh than would be a foreign Government, should any consent to advance the money required.

I told his Excellency that what I had said expressed merely my own personal

opinion, and that I was entirely unacquainted with the views which His Majesty's Government might have on the question of a loan.

His Excellency said that he quite understood that, but the whole question was still *en l'air*, and, of course, nothing could be done till after the arrival of M. Bizot.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh has since then furnished me with a private memorandum concerning a proposal for raising additional revenues to the amount of 2,500,000 tomans to 3,000,000 tomans, by an increase of the duties on tea and sugar, and expressing the hope that the British and Russian Governments will consent to this alteration of the Tariff.

I do not propose to give any reply to his Excellency on the matter, as I presume that, pending an examination of the situation by M. Bizot, His Majesty's Government will reserve their decision on all financial proposals. The idea has been borrowed from Sani-ed-Dowleh, who has for some time past been cogitating a scheme for the construction of a railway from Mohammerah via Dizful, Khorremabad, Sultanabad, and Kum to Tehran, and thence on to Bender-i-Gez on the Caspian Sea.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

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No. 204.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 14.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 29, 1908.

IN the early days of the month, though externally the town was quiet enough, it seemed as though another crisis might occur. The Shah, after a few days' comparative inactivity, recommenced his campaign against the Assembly. By his influence, exercised through two of the great ecclesiastics, the party at the Masjid-i-Mervi had been allowed to escape; reinforcements for the bodyguard were being brought into Tehran by dribblets; the Parsees were terrorized by the murder of a prominent member of their community for having assisted the Popular cause with money and arms; an attack on Mushir-ed-Dowleh's house, ascribed to burglars, was popularly believed to have been an attempt organized from the Palace on the life of the Minister, for whom the Shah is known to entertain a particular dislike; and Palace influence had been brought to bear on the Cabinet to prevent them giving such assurances to the Dutch Minister as would justify him in insisting on Saad-ed-Dowleh leaving the country.

On the 10th instant I had a long conversation with Nizam-es-Saltaneh, the new Premier, in which, after explaining to his Excellency that the recent Anglo-Russian Agreement was in no way inimical to Persia, but on the contrary left her free to develop unhampered by the distracting rivalry of the two Powers, I adverted to the existing situation, and asked his Excellency if he could suggest any means by which I could help to remove the distrust felt universally of the Shah.

With the usual Persian disinclination to commit himself, Nizam-es-Saltaneh beat about the bush for a time, but at last said abruptly that the only thing was to give the Shah good advice and persuade him to follow it. I said I would see what I could do, and then adverted to the murder of Fereidoun, and received a promise from the Premier that every effort would be made to punish the assassins.

I was unable to see the Russian Minister the following day, but in reply to a note saying I proposed to call on Sunday, I received one from M. de Hartwig late in the evening, letting me know that he was to see the Shah the next morning for the purpose of impressing on His Majesty the absolute need of good relations with the Assembly. I happened to meet M. de Hartwig soon after he had left the Palace, and he told me he had spoken to the Shah in the most serious manner, and believed that he had produced some impression.

I told him of my conversation with Nizam-es-Saltaneh; that I had wished to consult him (M. de Hartwig) before taking any such step as the Premier had hinted at, and I added that, as he had already taken action, the best thing would be for me to back it up with even stronger representations. I proposed to point out to His Majesty that the strength of the movement in favour of constitutional reform was too strong for him to overcome, that to resist it would result in the gravest danger to himself, and that if he sincerely desired to act as a constitutional Sovereign he must leave the administration of the affairs of the country to his responsible Ministers. M. de Hartwig expressed his entire concurrence. The same afternoon I went to arrange

with Mushir-ed-Dowleh for a private audience, and early the following morning received a note from him that the Shah would receive me the next morning, the 14th January, at 11 A.M.

In the meantime the Shah had received very serious warning from another quarter. On the previous day he had been waited on by the head of the Kajar tribe, a man who, having never meddled with politics in Persia, has a reputation for absolute disinterest and is universally respected, and by his brother, Shoa-es-Saltaneh. According to the accounts of the interview which have reached me, and which I believe to be substantially correct, Azad-ul-Mulk, using the patriarchal authority inherent in the head of a tribe, spoke with the utmost freedom. He said that he knew, as did every other Persian, that the Shah alone was responsible for the lamentable state of the country, and that he, as chief of the Imperial tribe, had come to inform His Majesty that, if he did not mend his ways, the Kajars themselves would decree his deposition and proclaim the Valiahd as Shah in his stead. The Shah, in reply, promised to receive a deputation from the Assembly, and to satisfy them of the sincerity of his amicable intentions.

Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh, who headed the deputation, has informed the German Chargé d'Affaires that the Shah was so impressed by the language employed towards him that he shed tears; that may or may not be true, but it is certain that His Majesty made every profession of loyal observance of his oaths to respect the Constitution, and that the deputation had to retire professedly satisfied. He appears, however, to have extracted in exchange a promise from the deputation to consider the increase of the Civil List.

At my audience on the following day, His Majesty's demeanour gave me the most unfavourable impression of his sincerity. As I had been warned to do by Mushir-ed-Dowleh, I used language of the simplest and most direct character. I told His Majesty that, while after the assurances he had given to the Russian Minister and myself I could not but believe in the sincerity of his own intentions, I could not help thinking that there were persons in his *entourage* who, in the belief that it was His Majesty's wish, were trying to oppose the introduction of constitutional reform. History showed that it was impossible to stem the flood of a nation's will, and that the attempt to do so was disastrous. Even in Russia, where the Tsar had at his disposal a vast and obedient army, where the system of indirect taxation furnished a sure revenue, and where a great army of civil servants were interested in supporting the Autocracy, the attempt had failed, and how could His Majesty hope to succeed with none of these resources? The people were very mistrustful, even hostile, and unless His Majesty could succeed in removing their suspicions his position would become one of the gravest peril. The best means of doing so would be to free himself of all appearance of being guided by the persons I had alluded to, and to refrain from direct interference in the Government, leaving the administration in the hands of the responsible Ministers. The Shah replied that he had no quarrel with Constitutional Government, but only with the present Assembly, which itself was continually guilty of unconstitutional acts. There were in it certain persons whose influence was wholly bad, and, if they could be got rid of, confidence would be restored. It was not true, as was asserted, that he thwarted the Ministers; he was by no means contented with the present Cabinet, of which he could only trust one Member, the Premier, Nizam-es-Saltaneh; but he did nothing to impede their work. I replied that if there were undesirable Deputies in the Parliament, that was an ill which would remedy itself, but that to attempt to remove them arbitrarily would be a most dangerous expedient. I could not conceal from His Majesty that, in my opinion, and in that of other foreign Representatives, his position was already very precarious; if he would take some overt steps to convince the nation that he desired to work cordially with them, he would meet with instant response, but if he persisted in his present attitude, the consequences might bring disaster to himself.

I cannot say that I was able to detect from the Shah's manner that I had produced much impression on him, but I have since been told that it had the effect of driving home the advice and warnings given him by Azad-ul-Mulk and the Russian Minister, the more so that His Majesty's Legation had so scrupulously abstained from isolated action.

Be this as it may, the Shah has permitted the arrest of Sani Hazret and Mukhtadir-i-Nizam, the leaders of his roughs during the crisis of December, as also that of two servants of Mujellal-es-Sultan, who are known to have been concerned in the murder of the Parsee banker, Fereidoun; but he still openly protects their master, who is

believed to have been the prime mover in the crime, and has directed his wrath upon the Minister of War, Zafar-es-Saltaneh, who caused the arrests to be made.

Since then, public attention has been directed chiefly to the enquiry, held at the Ministry of Justice, in the case of Sani Hazret and Mukhtadir-i-Nizam, and into the murder of Fereidoun. It is said that evidence has come to light showing the existence of a plot, in which Mujellal-es-Sultan was the chief agent, for the assassination of eight or ten of the most prominent of the Constitutional party, such as Taghi Zadeh, Musteshar-ed-Dowleh, Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh and Seyyed Mohammed.

The Ministers are disunited; Nizam-es-Saltaneh is mistrusted by his colleagues; he is, moreover, alleged to have allowed the Shah to draw on the Treasury and is suspected also by the people.

Meantime, dissensions have appeared in the Majlis itself. On the 26th instant there was a violent scene, lasting over an hour, in which the Deputies accused each other of speculation and self-interest, and the Financial Committee of the House was alleged to have connived at the grant of one or two pensions without any kind of justification; the President also has become an object of suspicion, and is accused of having joined the Shah's party and of scheming to drive Taghi Zadeh out of the House and to crush his party. Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh has also had a violent quarrel with the great Mujtehed, Seyyed Abdullah, whom he accused, and with perfect truth, of accepting bribes. The Majlis, indeed, seems to have split into three parties, those of the President, numbering some sixty-five Deputies, being the largest; that of Seyyed Abdullah is somewhat smaller, while Taghi Zadeh's counts but twenty-five supporters. The situation is, however, extremely confused, and it is impossible to say how it will develop, but the resignation of the President seems inevitable.

The Shah's position is, of course, relatively stronger, on account of the dissensions among the Popular leaders, fomented, no doubt, by himself, but he is just as much disliked as ever, and an attempt at another *coup d'état* would, so far from being successful, probably do more to reunite the Constitutionals than anything else.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[5428]

No. 205.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 17.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 28, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith paraphrases of telegraphic correspondence which has passed between this Legation and His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire respecting the situation brought about by the Turco-Persian frontier dispute and its bearing upon the position of the Sheikh of Mohammerah.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 205.

Consul-General Cox to Mr. Marling.

(No. 16.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Bushire, January 18, 1908.

SHEIKH of Mohammerah, in a recent interview, complained strongly of the unsatisfactory situation in which he finds himself in connection with the Turco-Persian frontier question.

He has no instructions as to the course he should pursue if hostilities break out from the Persian Government, who leave him entirely in the dark as to what is going on. Although he has under his jurisdiction an extensive frontier, starting a short distance above Mohammerah from the left bank of the Shatt-el-Arab, he has been provided neither with guns nor munitions of war.

A useful argument in future in support of the Sheikh's tribal status and semi-independence would seem to be furnished to us by the fact that he is being left to take care of himself on this occasion. The protection of Mohammerah from naval attack has already been undertaken by us. Would it not now be possible to inform the

Porte that we could not permit hostilities, either by river or land, between Bussorah and Mohammerah, our commercial interests in those two places and the Shatt-el-Arab being too great to admit of such an eventuality? The only recent information I have is from Reuter's telegrams. The situation, however, seems to be acute, and it would be prudent to retain a British gun-boat in the Shatt-el-Arab so long as it remains so.

Inclosure 2 in No. 205.

Mr. Marling to Consul-General Cox.

(No. 13.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier question.

Please refer to your telegram No. 16 of to-day.

Present position is as follows:—

The Turks, seizing opportunity offered by weak condition of Persia and present disinclination of the two mediating Powers to exert forcible pressure, have occupied certain districts to the west of Lake Urumia, and are endeavouring to create disorder by stirring up the frontier tribes of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. Firman Firma is now in difficulties, having proceeded to Soujboulak, which was threatened by the latter tribes, to restore order. At Urumia a joint Turco-Persian Commission is about to sit.

It seems improbable that the Turks will extend their activities as far as the Sheikh's territory, though vague indications are to hand of a Turkish movement in the neighbourhood of Khanikin, but not farther south.

A warning in the general sense of your suggestion was conveyed to the Porte long ago by Sir N. O'Connor, and I do not think it is at present necessary to have a gun-boat on the Shatt-el-Arab.

If the Urumia Commission can effect nothing, it is possible that we may eventually have to force the Turks to accept our arbitration, and in the meanwhile British and Russian Embassies are working actively at Constantinople, though without much practical effect as yet.

[5429]

No. 206.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 18.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual summary of events in Persia during the last month, including a résumé of the proceedings of the Assembly.

The condition of Shiraz is, happily, decidedly calmer, but in Tabreez and Yezd there have, during the last week, been the gravest disorders. The Persian Government is, I fear, quite helpless to maintain order, and, in reply to the repeated representations I have been obliged to make in connection with such cases as those of Yezd, the incident at Charbar, and the necessity of protecting the telegraph official at Kashan, I can elicit nothing more reassuring than that "the necessary measures will be taken." As regards Yezd, "the necessary measures" were represented by a telegram addressed to the Chief Mujtehed of the town asking him to use his influence to quell the riot.

In the Assembly the most notable events are the change of feeling towards the President, who only a month ago enjoyed the general confidence of the popular party, but is now, without any very apparent reason, looked upon with the greatest suspicion; and the zeal with which his Excellency advocated the acceptance of the German offer for the enlargement of the German school almost to the proportion of a University.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 206.

No. 1.—*Summary of Events for month ending January 30, 1908.*

Tehran.

The National Assembly.—During the past four weeks the proceedings of the Assembly, so far as they were conducted in public, have been even more irregular and purposeless than usual. A marked feeling of depression has been noticeable among the more serious Members, and the incidents of the last two days have shown that internal discord is strongly marked.

On the 4th January the British and Russian identic letters to the President of the 30th December, concerning the Shah's assurances of support to the Constitution, were read.

On the 7th January a similar letter, addressed to the President by the German Chargé d'Affaires, as well as a communication on the same subject from the Turkish Ambassador, was read.

On the 23rd January a deputation of Members waited on the Shah, who reiterated his previous assurances of support.

On the 26th January the President announced the intention of the German Government to greatly enlarge the present German College, for the purpose of instructing 700 pupils instead of 120 as heretofore. An increased subscription from the Persian Government would be necessary for this purpose, which he asked the House to sanction. He was reminded that the matter should come through the proper official channel, i.e., the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Education.

On the 28th January the President publicly denounced the Great Mujtehed, Seyed Abdullah, as corrupt, and, in reality, reactionary. He roundly abused the Mujtehed, and even accused some of the Members of corruption. He added that, though it had been his intention to vacate the Presidency and go to London as Persian Minister, he had now made up his mind to remain in the chair, as the Mujtehed had tried to force him to resign. This open declaration of war on the part of the President is interpreted by the public as a sign of treason on his part to the popular cause. It has long been known that Seyed Abdullah is swayed by dishonest motives, but the present moment is not thought to be opportune for a breach with the Great Mujtehed, who, with his colleague Seyed Mohammed, has from the outset been intimately connected with the popular movement. It is therefore thought that the President is acting in the interests of the Shah.

General News.—The Turkish Embassy and the German and Austrian Legations sent Secretaries to the Shah on the 9th January to congratulate His Majesty on the anniversary of the Coronation. The Austrian Secretary read an Address to the Shah referring to the events of December, which was intended as a reply from the Austrian Legation to the Assembly's Circular of the 17th December to all the Legations complaining of the Shah's violation of the Constitution.

On the night of the 7th January Erbab Feridoon, a partner of the Parsee firm of Jehanian Brothers, was brutally murdered in his house at Tehran by a gang of masked men, whose object was apparently not plunder. Subsequent investigations by the police have indicated that the leader of the gang was Mujallel-es-Sultan, one of the Shah's trusted Chamberlains, who has been in hiding, but is now again at the Palace.

On the 9th January some of the roughs who created a disturbance in the middle of December were flogged in the principal "maidan," and on the 13th January Sani Hazret, the leader of the roughs, was captured by the police and imprisoned.

The Russian Minister had a long audience of the Shah on the 12th January, and advised His Majesty most earnestly to abstain from all further attempt to overthrow the constitutional régime in view of the grave danger which he would thereby incur. His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires had a separate audience on the 14th January, and also spoke to the Shah in the same sense. His Majesty replied, as he had done on former occasions, that, far from wishing to overthrow the Constitution, he was himself the only true constitutionalist in Persia, the Members of the National Assembly and Enjumens being common revolutionaries. Mr. Marling laid great stress on the impracticability of stemming the wave of popular feeling and reverting to the former system of autocracy, and on the grave dangers to His Majesty which such a course would entail. The previous day Azad-ul-Mulk and Shoa-es-Sultaneh spoke to the

Shah in the same sense, and His Majesty received a deputation of Members of the Assembly, to whom he again took oath on the Koran to observe and uphold the Constitution.

The Shah has pardoned Prince Salar-ed-Dowleh, his brother, who had been kept in confinement in one of the Royal gardens outside Tehran since the rebellion he led last summer.

On the 21st January Mr. Churchill called on Amir Behadur at his request, and was sounded as to whether the British Legation would extend protection to him in case he found himself in difficulties. He had already made a similar demand to the Russian Legation.

During December one of the Shah's confidential Chamberlains approached Mr. Churchill with offers to act as Court spy. During the course of a number of interviews during the last month it has become quite apparent that the Chamberlain acted by the Shah's orders, and was himself seeking information. He offered to work against Russian influence at Court, or even to bring about the deposition of the Shah if we liked. The reply given apparently reassured the Shah.

The Press.—The political articles formerly appearing in the "Habl-ul-Matin" are now to be found in the "Medjliss" newspaper, the writer of these articles, a certain Sheikh Yahya, having been offered more pay by the latter paper. The articles in question are extremely anti-foreign, and harp upon the subject of the Anglo-Russian agreement. They, however, display great ignorance of international politics, and, though widely read, have apparently very little influence with the public in general.

(Signed) G. P. CHURCHILL.
Oriental Secretary.

P.S.—The Zil-es-Sultan's favourite son, Prince Bahram Mirza, has just been appointed Governor of Sultanabad.

G. P. C.

Tabreez.

1. On the 17th January a fight broke out between the revolutionaries and some roughs. Fighting lasted for two days, and twenty people were killed or wounded. Intermittent fighting, however, continued until the end of the month, when cavalry and infantry were posted in the town to keep order. This step restored tranquillity. These disturbances are stated to be due to the action of the Shah, who had planned to have riots in Tabreez at the time that he made his *coup d'état* in Tehran. The Governor-General, secretly a supporter of the Shah, left Tabreez early in December on the pretext of dealing with a troublesome Kurdish tribe, but in reality to leave the town without a Governor when the riots were timed to occur. Unfortunately for the Shah his agents were unable to bring off the riots until a month after the appointed time.

2. In consequence of the above disturbances the Russians are reported to be introducing more Cossacks.

Resht.

The excitement caused by the disturbances at Tehran seems to have died out, and the province of Ghilan appears to be in a normal condition.

Astrabad.

1. One of the Chiefs of the Yamuts has telegraphed to the Governor offering to hand over forty-eight captives and 9,000 stolen sheep. The Goklans have handed over eighteen captives. The Attabi, Ilki, and Daz Turkomans have agreed to restore everything taken by them in their raids if no expedition is sent against them.

2. Two Russian gun-boats, each with twelve guns and 400 soldiers on board, were at Ashurada at the end of December.

3. A camp of 1,670 infantry and 820 cavalry has been formed outside the town.

Meshed.

1. The five Turks previously referred to left Herat for Kabul in December.
2. It is stated that the Russians have received permission to export 40,000 tons of wheat from Khorassan to Transcaspiia.
3. After remaining closed for a week, all the public offices were again opened at the end of December, by order of the local Assembly.
4. The Russian Consul-General is reported to have freely stated, during the crisis of December, that Persia could no longer manage her own affairs and Russia would have to intervene.
5. M. de Giers informed Major Sykes that the Russian Minister at Tehran had instructed him to consult his British colleague before publishing the information that the two Legations had made themselves morally responsible for the Shah. He agreed with Major Sykes that publishing the news would only irritate public opinion, but the information reached Meshed from other sources and caused a strong feeling against us.

Turbat-i-Hayderi.

The road to Yezd has been practically closed by robbers under Timour Khan, one of the retinue of the Governor of Tabbas. A caravan carrying goods belonging to an agent of Messrs. Ziegler was robbed during December.

Ispahan.

1. The active opposition of the Aghas to foreign trade seems to have ceased. No further threats have been aimed at native merchants, and British firms can once more send out goods with fear of molestation.
2. Agha Nejefi, fearing the National Assembly might, to show their gratitude, allow the Zil-es-Sultan to return to Ispahan, wrote, in concert with other members of the clergy, a letter to the Zil expressing a wish for his return. Agha Norullah, however, opposed the project.
3. The recent crisis at Tehran caused some excitement at Ispahan. The bazaars were closed and the volunteers drilled. The drilling of the latter is still continued.
4. Eleven sowars of the twelve extra men ordered to Ispahan arrived from India on the 22nd January.

Kashan.

On the 28th January a large armed crowd of the supporters of Mahomed Agha under threats of violence compelled the clerk in charge of the British telegraph office to hand over the line to them, as they wished to telegraph to Tehran. Subsequently the clerk was authorized to allow them to use the wire for two hours daily. Representations have been made to the Persian Government.

Yezd.

A merchant who some months ago killed his brother was on the 25th January by the Governor's orders, removed from the place where he had taken sanctuary and killed. This was done by the Chief of the Night Street Guard, who then took refuge in the Governor's fort. The town was then terrorized by an armed rabble, who demanded the life of the Chief of the Guard and the expulsion of the Governor. The Chief of the Guard, being surrendered to them, was immediately shot dead. The crowd then informed the Governor that he could remain if he promised to take no step against them later on. He, however, resigned and left the town. He has stated his willingness to return only if given 200 horsemen to enforce order. The town remains in the hands of two self-appointed Chiefs of Guards.

Seistan.

1. The Director of Posts and Customs informed Major Kennion that he had received a credit for the construction of a caravanserai at Kuh-i-Malik Siah, but could not find labourers to go there. He promised to make the matter his first care, and has since dispatched M. Mornard to arrange it.

2. Five sowars have been detached from the Seistan Consular guard for duty at Birjand.

3. Herr Kurt Jung, German Commercial Agent, arrived at Birjand from Meshed on the 4th January, and left for Yezd, via Tabbas, on the 7th.

4. The report that the Russian Bank in Seistan is about to be closed is contradicted. It is now stated that a new Manager will arrive shortly.

5. In connection with the prohibition of the export of grain from Seistan, the Finance Minister telegraphed to the Persian telegraphist asking how long the prohibition to export grain to Afghanistan had been in force, and whether, if it were withdrawn, the revenue grain would find a ready sale. He replied that the prohibition was imposed four years ago, and that the withdrawal of the order would have a good effect.

Kerman.

The news of the disturbances at Tehran in December caused the closing of the bazaars for two days. The National Assembly having telegraphed that the people should hold themselves in readiness, the Nazim and the Naib, who were practically dictators, seized the arsenal and generally began military preparations.

Kermanshah.

1. Zahir-ed-Dowleh, the Governor, left Kermanshah without warning on the night of the 12th December. He had promised the people that he would recover the money due to them on account of the riots and pay it to them in ten days. It is thought he left on finding he could not keep his word in this matter. He has since reached Tehran.

2. Mollah Mehdi, a prominent leader in the riots last June, returned to Kermanshah early in January with the support and approval of the chief priest at Kerbelah. He was received with much distinction.

3. Captain Haworth left Kermanshah on the 19th January for Kasr Shereen, so as to be able to send reliable information to Tehran of reported Turkish movements in that part.

Hamadan.

Owing to the insecurity of the road, the Turkish merchants trading with Bagdad arranged to pay Abbas Khan Afshar for the safe conduct of their merchandize. His five sons, accompanied by parties of armed men, were committing robberies on the roads and in the villages. Other parties of robbers were also out.

Shiraz.

1. The situation in the town remained fairly calm, and a reconciliation between the two factions was reported to have taken place early in January, since when there has been no further disturbance.

2. No fresh robberies were reported on the Bushire road until the 24th January, when the post was robbed near Daliki, but Mr. Grahame reports that trade on that road is practically at a standstill. On the 25th January a report was received that there had been considerable disturbances near Borazjun. The Ispahan road has been very unsafe, the road guards near Dehbid and Khaneh Kirgan themselves robbing caravans, one of which contained goods belonging to a British firm. The goods of another British firm were robbed near the tomb of Cyrus.

3. The Tehran relieved escort, which had been detained owing to disturbances at Shiraz, left for Bushire on the 14th January. A week later a telegram was received stating that one sowar had been robbed of his rifle while riding some way ahead of the caravan near Daliki.

Persian Gulf.

Bushire.

1. The Russian steam-ship "Tigris" arrived on the 9th December, and left next day for Bussorah. The Russian Agent and his wife were on board.

2. The news of the disturbances at Tehran created a good deal of excitement. Telegrams were received from the National Assembly, the leading priests of Tehran,

and from Resht asking for support for the National Assembly. A favourable reply was sent.

3. The two pirates captured by His Majesty's ships were handed over by the Resident to Sheikh Khazal of Mohammerah, who awarded them imprisonment for life. In Bushire it is stated that the people of Bunder Rig blame their Chief for giving up the pirates to His Majesty's ships, as they do not believe that the ultimatum presented to him would have been carried out had he not complied.

4. Muin-et-Tujjar, who has already had a nominee of his elected to represent Mohammerah in the National Assembly, is now endeavouring to get another elected for Bushire.

Bunder Abbas.

1. The country round the town being in a very disturbed condition, His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" was ordered to Bunder Abbas and remained there for the first two weeks of December. Later, thanks to the energetic measures taken by the Governor-General of the Gulf Ports, the situation improved, but caravan traffic remained suspended.

2. It has been decided to open a school at Bunder Abbas; 2,000 tomans were subscribed for the object, which is supported by the Governor-General and the local authorities. To raise further funds it has been agreed to levy 1 shahi on each package landed from ships.

Lingah.

Mr. Brown, of the German firm of Wonckhaus and Co., is reported to have advised the Belgian Director of Customs to have nothing to do with the quarantine Medical Officer, alleging that the latter passes on any information he gets to the British Agent. In support of this he quoted the cancellation of the Abu Musa red oxide contract. The Director replied that he wished to be on good terms with everybody.

Charbar.

On the 25th January the Resident, Persian Gulf, telegraphed that reports had reached him from Charbar that a representative of Serdar Saïd Khan, of Geh, with fifty armed men, had seized the Customs and was demanding, under threat of force from British traders, money due by them to the Customs. This man claimed that he was acting with the authority of the Persian Government. The Resident, having ascertained that this was untrue, directed the traders only to pay if threatened with force, and then under protest. At the same time he requested Saïd Khan's representative to delay further action for forty-eight hours, warning him he would have to reckon with the British Government if he did not. His Majesty's ship "Perseus" was meanwhile ordered to Charbar, but arrived to find that the Baluchis had levied the customs duties by force and decamped. Similar action was taken at the same time by another Chief at Gwetter.

Mohammerah.

1. Two Europeans, said to be an Englishman and an Austrian, called on the Sheikh in December with proposals to hire land on the Karun for cotton plantations. The Sheikh was considering the matter. Inquiries are being made as to who the men are.

2. The Sheikh has ordered the sale to Messrs. Lynch of the amount of grain required to complete their contracts, about 600 tons.

Ahwaz.

1. A small force of Turkish troops is reported to have invaded Pusht-i-Kuh, but to have been very roughly handled and driven out by the Vali's forces.

2. The telegraph line between Ahwaz and Mohammerah was out of order for some weeks, the Ahwaz-Borazjun line from the 18th November to the 6th December. In each case the removal of poles was supposed to be the cause.

(Signed) C. B. STOKES, Major.

[5430]

No. 207.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 19.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 9 of the 21st January, and to Sir N. O'Connor's telegrams Nos. 17 and 19, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of further notes which I have received from the Persian Government respecting the Turco-Persian frontier and the action of Turkish troops near Saoujboulak.

I have, &c.

(For His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires),

(Signed)

R. G. VANSITTART.

Inclosure 1 in No. 207.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Translation.)

January 21, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegram recently addressed to the National Assembly by the inhabitants of Saoujboulak, respecting the misbehaviour of Mohammed Fazl Pasha-i-Farik. You will be informed by this telegram of Farik Pasha's action at Saoujboulak, which is beyond the sphere of his duty.

I avail, &c.

Inclosure 2 in No. 207.

Inhabitants of Saoujboulak to National Assembly.

(Telegraphic.)

[Undated.]

WE have been complaining for the last two years that, by murder and plunder committed by the Mankur tribe and Bayazid Agha, people have been forced by Farik Pasha, since he came to Pesva, to seek Turkish protection. Owing to their ignorance of the Government affairs, the Chiefs of the Mukri village have put themselves under Turkish protection, and thus have saved their villages from murder and plunder.

When the Sardar Muktader left we went to Farik Pasha and complained of the insecurity of Saoujboulak. He said we were telling lies, and he said things we cannot repeat. We told him that our property was carried off by Bayazid Agha by his instigation, but he did not pay us any attention.

When he heard of the coming of Firman Firma, he sent Bayazid Agha to the town of Saoujboulak. The Turkish Consul sent some mule-mounted men to turn the Foreign Office Agent and the Director of Customs out of the town. We refused to open the doors willingly. We reported the matter to Firman Firma, and told him that Farik Pasha had sent Bayazid to Hamzehabad to come and take possession of the town. The Firman Firma arrived at Saoujboulak on the 5th January.

Bayazid Agha, with 5,000 horsemen, and Hamzeh Solaiman, with 1,000 horsemen and about 400 Karapapak horsemen, have been sent by Farik Pasha to Kum Kaleh to plunder the houses who are with Firman Firma and to kill their owners. He has also ordered them to fight with the people of Miandoab, to destroy the villages in the district, and then to proceed to Saoujboulak. Farik is doing this in order to cause blood-feud between the Kurds and the Turks, and to stir up religious fanaticism between the Sunnis and Shias.

By order of Farik the Begzadehs attacked the houses of Shahsevens at Miandoab. The former lost four and the latter fourteen men in fighting.

Inclosure 3 in No. 207.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Translation.)

January 21, 1908.

I HAD the honour to address you a note on the 19th instant respecting the Saoujboulak incident, and the measures taken by Farik Pasha in exciting the rebel-

lious tribes. I have now the honour to inform you of the following telegram received from Tabreez respecting a recent report from Miandoab:—

"A long report has been received from Miandoab respecting the misbehaviour of Farik (Mohammed Fazl Pasha, Ferik), and that the matter has assumed a most serious aspect. The men are in trenches at Kum Kaleh and Agri Tash, and that Farik is coming to Saoujboulak. He has written officially demanding the withdrawal of his Highness from Saoujboulak. He has sent some soldiers and officers to the villages of the Chiefs exciting them to fight."

This proceeding of the Turkish officials, which is contrary to the rights of nations and which has placed the frontier affairs in a most serious position, has caused much surprise and regret, which I have no doubt will be shared by you.

I therefore have the honour to renew my request mentioned in my previous note, and to ask you to be good enough to inform the British Government of this new fact, in order that the British Embassy may be instructed to co-operate with that of Persia, at Constantinople, in negotiating with the Porte for the purpose of restraining the action of Mohammed Fazl Pasha, Farik, and that of the Turkish tribes.

I avail, &c.

[5431]

No. 208.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 20.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have been constantly pressing the Persian Government to pay the interest, overdue since the 4th April, 1907, on the Anglo-Indian loan of 1903-4, and also to give me a reply to Sir Cecil Spring-Rice's note of the 31st August, 1907, in which he informed the Persian Government of the terms on which His Majesty's Government were ready to accede to the Persian request for the suspension for three years of the payment of the sinking fund on that loan.

In reply to my representations, I have more than once received promises on both points, but so far these assurances have been unfulfilled. On the 27th instant the Minister for Foreign Affairs sent me a message to the effect that 9,000*l.* would be paid at once as interest, and when I saw his Excellency two days later he assured me that this sum had actually been paid. I told his Excellency that there appeared to be some confusion as to the proportions of the instalments representing interest and sinking fund, which were, in round figures, 13,000*l.* and 9,000*l.* respectively, and that I looked on the sum which his Excellency had said has been paid as an instalment of interest, and hoped the balance would soon be forthcoming.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh said that he hoped to be able to give me a reply about the suspension of the sinking fund in a few days, but, unless he gets a sharp reminder, I fear that his promise, like so many others, will remain unfulfilled. In the circumstances, I think it would be expedient, as I suggested in my telegram No. 34 of the 28th instant, that the Persian Government should be informed officially that, in view of the time they have allowed to pass without replying to the Legation notes of the 31st August, the 15th October, and the 9th December, His Majesty's Government consider that the Persian Government have tacitly accepted their conditions.

It appears to me that, in view of the possibility of a foreign loan, it would be as well that our position in this matter should be clearly defined.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

CHARLES M. MARLING.

P.S. *January 31.*—I learn from Mr. Rabino that nothing has yet been paid, and the Customs have not received any instructions to effect any payment.

C. M. M.

[5432]

No. 209.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 21. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, January 30, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to offer the following observations on the antecedents and character of Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh, the Persian Minister-designate in London :—

Mahmoud Khan is a member of the Kajar tribe. He was born about 1865, and is a son of the late Ala-ed-Dowleh, Amir-i-Nizam, and a brother of the present Ala-ed-Dowleh. He was Governor of Zinjan in 1891 and 1892; and subsequently, from 1895 to 1897, Consul-General at Bagdad. In 1895 he was attached as First Secretary to the Special Embassy sent to Russia on the occasion of the Czar's coronation, and in 1897 was Under-Secretary of State in the Persian Foreign Office. Four years later he was appointed to the Legation in Berlin, and during that time married a German lady, who did not accompany her husband on his being summoned to Tehran in 1906.

On his arrival in Persia, Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh distinguished himself by the violence of his denunciation of the abuses in the Administration, and was consequently sent off into an honourable exile as Persian Delegate to the Turco-Persian Frontier Commission which sat at Mosul in 1906. He returned to Tehran in August 1907, and at once gained the popular sympathy by his ardent support of constitutional government. On the murder of the Attabek and resignation of Sani-ed-Dowleh, the President of the Assembly, he was elected to the presidential chair, though he was not even a Deputy, and still nominally held the post of Minister in Berlin.

Until the end of November he was unquestionably the most powerful man in Persia. He speedily saw that what was required was a stronger Executive, and, in order to give the moral support of the Assembly to the Minister, he devised the system of Parliamentary Committees to watch over the actions of each Department. He realized also that the character of the Assembly was incompatible with the dispatch of business, especially when it was so often called on to interfere in purely administrative matters; he thus allowed himself to take action on his own responsibility in many questions on which the House had not been consulted. His somewhat peremptory tone in debate also roused a certain amount of discontent, and his attacks on the privileges of the Mollahs made him enemies among the clergy, while the fact that he was often received in private audience by the Shah gave occasion to his opponents to spread reports that he was a traitor to the popular cause. Early in December his popularity waned, but during the crisis he seemed to have entirely re-established his position, though his intimacy with the German Legation did not pass uncriticized.

Since then he has become more and more convinced that constitutional government on the existing lines is impracticable, and has expressed his opinion that for some time to come another form of government of a far less democratic type is necessary. This despondency has been interpreted as lukewarmness, and this, added to the old grievances against him, have made Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh an object of general suspicion; and his recent attack on the great Mujtehid, which was undoubtedly a grave tactical error at the present juncture, has laid him open to the accusation of attempting to make a split in the constitutional ranks. Be this as it may, there is a large and powerful party who believe that Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh has joined the reactionaries. I cannot see any real grounds for these accusations; it seems to me that, like many other Persians, Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh believes that constitutional government was the only cure for the infamous misrule of Mozaffer-ed-Din Shah, but that he has been among the first to discover that the country is not yet fit for it, and, unfortunately for himself, the first also to proclaim it.

Of all the personages who have played parts in recent events, Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh has, on the whole, displayed the most statesmanlike qualities. His intelligence and education are not on the same level as those of Nasr-ul-Mulk, but, on the other hand, he has a good deal of the firmness of character in which the late Premier was so deficient. His personal honesty, so far as I am aware, has never been seriously impugned, any more than that of Nasr-ul-Mulk, an exceedingly rare thing in Persia. His manner is agreeable, but he is somewhat inclined to conceal his real views in conversation. He speaks German and French, but has scarcely any knowledge of English.

He is of course very much under German influence, and it was through him that the German Chargé d'Affaires was able to play so conspicuous a part in the crisis of December. Baron von Richthofen has probably succeeded in thoroughly convincing him of the unfriendly designs of Russia and England against Persia. As an instance, I may mention that only a few days ago, at a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Assembly, a suggestion was put forward that a formal appeal should be made to England and Russia in connection with the frontier question. Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh opposed the proposal vigorously, saying that the two Powers neither could nor would assist Persia, and that Germany was the only Power to whom Persia could turn. I sent a friendly message to Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh that this language was somewhat unsuitable in the mouth of a newly appointed Minister in London, and he of course denied having used it—indeed, he could hardly do otherwise—but I have no doubt of the correctness of my information.

Ala-es-Saltaneh, the late Minister in London, is promoted to the Embassy at Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[5586]

No. 210.

Acting Consul-General Stevens to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Batoum, February 3, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that rumours which got abroad here about a fortnight ago that war with Turkey was imminent are daily gaining ground, and although probably likely to be unfounded, they have created much excitement and a considerable amount of alarm throughout the Caucasus, and more especially at Tiflis, in view of the uneasiness with which the military authorities have met the encroachments of Turkey on Persian territory, and the feverish heat with which they are now adopting a series of precautionary measures against the former Power, possibly only as a counter-move to the concentration of Turkish forces in the vicinity of the western and southern confines of the Caucasus.

I am told the Viceroy at Tiflis has received information that the Turkish military authorities are very active along the frontier between the Black Sea, Olti, and Kars, and again south-east of the latter town, where they have at different points erected batteries, placed guns in them, and adopted a very defiant attitude towards the Russians—in fact, so much so that Prince Woronzow-Dashkoff has considered matters to be sufficiently serious to warrant the dispatch of General Shatiloff, Assistant Commander-in-chief of the military forces in the Caucasus, to specially report to headquarters at St. Petersburg on the situation.

Meanwhile, as already reported to His Majesty's Ambassador in St. Petersburg, the 39th Division of Infantry received orders to mobilize about a week ago, and since then several strong detachments of troops are reported to have been moved nearer to the Russo-Turkish and Russo-Persian frontiers, and it is said the 20th Division is also to mobilize shortly.

I have it on good authority that at Djulfa 2,000 infantry with several quick-firing guns have been stationed. At Urdubad, which is a very large Armenian village in the neighbourhood of the Persian frontier, all vacant houses have been engaged by the authorities for quartering troops. Similar arrangements are being made at Batoum, in the province of which it is reported two divisions are shortly to be quartered. Again, I am told that troops are gradually being drawn towards Igdir, Kagisman, Olti, Ordjoch, and one or two other points of the frontier.

It is likewise stated, that two Army Corps are to be brought to the Caucasus from Russia, and yesterday quite a number of Plastuns arrived here from Novorossisk.

Military activity is reported to be considerable on the Tiflis-Kars and Alexandropol-Djulfa Railways.

Although I am inclined to think that all these reports are exaggerated, and am unwilling to circulate alarmist news or to regard the situation in the pessimistic light in which it has been represented to me by many persons, yet under the circumstances I am disposed to take the view that a movement of some considerable importance is contemplated by the Russian Government.

I may here also mention that the native Mahomedans (of Turkish origin) residing

along the frontier, who are in constant touch with their coreligionists across the border, are also not backward in spreading the report that hostilities between Russia and Turkey will surely break out in March next.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

[5449]

No. 211.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 68.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 5, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY read to me to-day a telegram which he had received from M. Zinoview stating that though the occupation of Soujboulak by the Ottoman troops seemed to be an accomplished fact, the Sublime Porte continued to deny having any knowledge of it, though they admitted that if it had occurred it would be an infraction of the *status quo*. M. Zinoview suggested that, in the circumstances, it might be well if the British and Russian Consuls were to proceed to the locality and verify on the spot what had really occurred. M. Isvolsky said that this proposal seemed to him to be a good one, and he agreed to a suggestion on my part that I should telegraph it to you in order to ascertain if you would be disposed to issue the necessary instructions to Mr. Wratislaw.

I asked him if he had come to any decision in regard to the proposal made by Count Benckendorff that some formal protest should be lodged in respect to the recent proceedings of the Turks on the frontier, and he replied that he had not yet thought out the question. It would, he said, be advisable in the first place to be in full possession of what had actually happened on and in the proximity of the frontier.

I think it probable that before this despatch reaches you, M. Poklewski will have been in a position to acquaint you with what has been decided in consultation with the military authorities here, as he is leaving for London to-morrow, and is to have an interview with M. Isvolsky before his departure. The reports of certain preparations on the part of the Ottoman Government may possibly necessitate some redistribution of the Russian forces in the Caucasus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[5453]

No. 212.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 73.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 9, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 28 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky informing me that he agrees with the proposal to approach the Persian Government with a view of effecting the exchange of the control over the Meshed-Tehran and Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines. His Excellency wishes, at the same time, that the question of the transfer to the Russian Administration of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line should also be treated, and requests to be furnished with a copy of the Telegraph Convention of 1872, so that he may see what rights and obligations would be attached to the transfer.

The 1872 Convention deals chiefly with the Tehran-Bushire line, and Article XVI mentions that it would equally apply to the Khanikin section, should the British Director wish to resume charge over that latter line. I doubt if the above Convention would give all the information desired by M. Isvolsky, as Article XVI states that a tariff would have to be arranged for the Khanikin section, should it re-enter under British Administration; and I think that he would wish to be informed of the date on which the line was handed over to the Persian Government, and the reasons for this transference.

I am unaware how the Persian Government would view the transfer on our part to Russia of rights which had been suspended for over thirty years, and it would, perhaps, have been more convenient if the Khanikin question had been treated separately from the exchange of the other two lines. At the same time I think that the Russian Government would wish to see the matter settled as soon as possible,

as they are no doubt at present nervous as to Germany acquiring some right of pre-emption after the termination of the Concession in 1925. Moreover, Russia has agreed to offer no opposition to the prolongation of the other Telegraph Concessions, on the understanding that the transference to them of our above-mentioned rights should be effected, so that it would not be desirable to afford them any grounds for supposing that, so far as we were concerned, we wished any delay to arise in carrying out the arrangement.

I should be grateful if I could be furnished with such information as is available to enable me to reply to M. Isvolsky's request.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 212.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Le 25 Janvier (7 Février), 1908.

EN réponse à votre lettre du 14 (27) Janvier courant, je m'empresse de vous faire savoir que je ne trouve pas d'objections à ce que les Représentants d'Angleterre et de Russie à Téhéran entrent actuellement en pourparlers avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah au sujet de l'échange des lignes télégraphiques en Perse. Je pense également, tout comme vous, qu'il serait préférable de faire cette proposition aux Persans, non pas comme un complément à la Convention du 18 (31) Août, 1907, mais simplement comme une transaction provoquée par des considérations d'ordre économique et technique. On pourrait, par exemple, faire ressortir aux yeux des Ministres du Schah le développement progressif des communications télégraphiques de la Perse, entraînant pour cette dernière l'obligation d'entretenir ces lignes dans un aussi bon état que possible; leur faire comprendre ensuite que l'entretien et les réparations des lignes seraient de beaucoup facilités si cette tâche incombait, pour la section sud de la ligne de Seistan, au Département Télégraphique de l'Inde, dans le voisinage immédiat duquel cette ligne se trouve, et pour les lignes Méched-Téhéran et Téhéran-Khanékin à l'Administration des Télégraphes Russes.

Je mentionne la ligne Téhéran-Khanékin parce qu'il me semble désirable de traiter avec le Gouvernement Persan les questions des trois lignes en même temps. A ce propos, je vous serais reconnaissant de bien vouloir me faire parvenir le texte de la Convention Anglo-Persane de 1872 dont il est fait mention dans la note verbale de l'Ambassade Britannique du 14 (27) Août, 1907, parce qu'il me paraît indispensable de bien tirer au clair les droits et les obligations qui se rattachent à cette ligne.

Aussitôt que ce point aura été définitivement éclairci, MM. Marling et Hartwig pourront, je pense, procéder aux négociations avec le Gouvernement Persan.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,
(Signé) ISVOLSKY.

[5459]

No. 213.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 79.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 12, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY touched lightly to-day on the affairs on the Turco-Persian frontier and in Persia itself. In respect to the former he said that a proposal had been made, he believed by Taher Pasha, that the Consuls should attend the sittings of the Commission, and I told him that if the suggestion were made by the Sublime Porte my Government would raise no objection to such a participation. He observed that M. de Hartwig was of opinion that a visit on the part of the Consuls to Soujboulak might give rise to some misunderstanding, and also be attended with considerable personal risk. Perhaps it might be as well to abandon the project, especially as the Sublime Porte had declared that they had ordered the evacuation of that locality. I replied that I did not doubt but that my Government would agree with him.

In regard to Persia, the last move of the irrepressible German Chargé d'Affaires was to advise the Persian Government to appeal to all the Powers in respect to their

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frontier difficulties, and to assure them that Germany alone could afford them any efficacious assistance. Otherwise his Excellency did not appear to have received any news of special interest from Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[5608] No. 214.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 17.)

(No. 46.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, February 17, 1908.*
TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. Please see my immediately preceding telegram of the 15th February.
Captain Haworth, telegraphing from Kasr-i-Shirin, reports arrival at Khanikin on the 13th February of one tapur of 400 men.

[4956] No. 215.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 35.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, February 17, 1908.*
INTEREST on loan. Please refer to your telegram No. 34 of the 28th ultimo.
If there is further delay, and payment is not made by the 4th April next, interest for one year at 5 per cent. will probably have to be added to the sum you mention (which is correct).
With reference to sinking fund, the communication that you propose to address to Minister for Foreign Affairs, as to suspension, has my approval.

[5606] No. 216.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 14.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, February 17, 1908.*
A TELEGRAM from Tehran has appeared in the "Berliner Tageblatt" to the effect that the Shah has promised to pay an annual subsidy of 2,500*l.* to the German school in that capital. It is stated that the subsidy, which was to have been granted on the Emperor William's birthday last month, is to be guaranteed by a lien on the customs revenue.
I have to instruct you to endeavour to ascertain whether there is any truth in this statement, and to report to me in due course the result of your inquiries.
I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[5787] No. 217.

Mr. J. Preece to Foreign Office.—(Received February 18.)

Sir, *1, St. James' Place, London, February 15, 1908.*
I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your despatch of 13th instant, and to thank you for it.
The Syndicate are much pleased at the news conveyed by Mr. Marling's despatch, and are glad to hear of the improved situation in the Bakhtiari country. They are much obliged to him for all the trouble he has taken in their affairs, and are quite willing to leave the question of instalments in his hands altogether.
As regards the payment of the guards by Mr. Reynolds, if Captain Lorimer can obtain the Khan's permission to this procedure it would certainly be the best solution of the difficulty. Mr. Reynolds has always advocated this. At the same time it must not be forgotten that when it was agreed to pay the Chiefs 2,000*l.* per annum for

guards, this payment was made as a sort of compensation to them for use of their country, as well as for safeguard of the Syndicate's property and people.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

[5689] No. 218.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 18.)

(No. 68.)
Sir, *Paris, February 17, 1908.*
I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a Memorandum from the French Government inclosing the text of the instructions given to M. Bizot, Financial Adviser to the Persian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS BERTIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 218.

M. Pichon to Sir F. Bertie.

POUR répondre au désir qui lui a été exprimé, M. Pichon a l'honneur d'adresser ci-joint à son Excellence l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre le texte des instructions qui ont été remises à M. Bizot, Conseiller Financier du Gouvernement Persan, au moment où il se dispose à aller prendre possession de ses fonctions.

L'Ambassadeur de la République à Londres a reçu d'autre part le texte de ces instructions, qu'il a été invité à communiquer au Gouvernement Royal.

Paris, le 17 Février, 1908.

[Inclosure 2 in No. 218.

Text of Instructions given to M. Bizot.

VOUS devrez naturellement donner tous vos soins à l'étude de la situation financière si précaire de la Perse, du fonctionnement de l'Administration et des ressources du pays; vous aurez ensuite à examiner les mesures qui pourraient être adoptées pour remédier à l'état de choses actuel, établir un budget sur des bases sérieuses et relever le crédit de la Perse. Vous aurez enfin à définir les moyens à mettre en œuvre pour assurer l'application des mesures qui vous auront paru nécessaires. Mais vous ne devez pas perdre de vue que vos attributions sont purement consultatives, et que si vous avez pour mission d'assister les autorités Persanes de vos conseils et de donner au Gouvernement Impérial votre avis sur toutes les questions qu'il jugera utile de vous soumettre, vous n'avez pas à prendre une part directe à l'exécution des mesures proposées: vous associer aux responsabilités gouvernementales serait en effet adopter une ligne de conduite préjudiciable au succès de votre tâche et à l'autorité qui doit s'attacher à vos fonctions.

Vous n'ignorez pas que votre mission emprunte aux circonstances dans lesquelles elle vous a été confiée une importance particulière: par les Accords du 31 Août dernier ont été réglées les questions multiples qui touchent aux intérêts de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie sur le Continent Asiatique, et nous avons le dessein de seconder, dans la mesure de nos moyens, cette politique bienfaisante d'entente entre les deux grandes Puissances voisines de la Perse. Vous aurez, en conséquence, à demeurer en contact étroit avec notre Légation à Téhéran, et à conformer dans les lignes générales votre action à celle de notre Représentant. Il appartient au Ministre de la République en Perse, d'accord avec ses collègues de Grande-Bretagne et de Russie, de vous faire connaître de quelle manière vous pourrez le plus utilement seconder les vues communes des Cabinets de Paris, de Londres et de Saint-Petersbourg. Vous devrez veiller à ce que les initiatives que vous pourrez être amené à prendre en matière financière ne soient pas susceptibles de soulever des objections de la part des Gouvernements Anglais et Russe, et vous aurez soin, notamment, de n'aborder aucune question d'emprunt sans vous être assuré auprès de notre Légation qu'un accord préalable a été

établi à cet égard entre les Représentants de la France, de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie. Dès l'abord, ainsi que vous le savez, nous avons estimé avec le Gouvernement Russe que le Conseiller Financier devait rester étranger aux questions que ne peut manquer de soulever le projet de création d'une Banque Nationale en Perse. Sur l'insistance du Gouvernement Persan nous avons accepté que la question de la Banque figurât dans le contrat au nombre de celles qui pourront être soumises à votre examen, mais vous devrez observer à cet égard une attitude particulièrement réservée : d'une part, en effet, la création d'une Banque Nationale Persane aurait pour effet de concurrencer les deux banques déjà existantes dont l'une est Russe et l'autre Anglaise ; d'autre part il est permis de se demander si, en discutant un projet dont la réalisation paraît à peu près impossible, au moins actuellement, le Gouvernement et le Parlement de Téhéran n'ont pas principalement pour objectif de donner une satisfaction platonique à l'opinion publique momentanément exaltée en faveur de toute création "nationale."

[5784]

No. 219.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 18.)

(No. 47.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 18, 1908.

LOAN interest.

13,000L have been paid by Persian Government, and Minister for Foreign Affairs states that for the present they are unable to pay more.

Reference is to my telegram No. 34 of the 28th ultimo.

[5900]

No. 220.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 29.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, February 19, 1908.

YOUR despatch No. 32 of the 7th instant.

I saw M. Isvolsky to-day, who informed me that the Turkish Ambassador had, under instructions from his Government, assured him spontaneously that the alleged Turkish military preparations were actuated by no unfriendly spirit to, and in no wise directed against, Russia, and the Turkish Government wished to assure the Cabinet in St. Petersburg of their pacific and friendly disposition. They had merely been made in order to guard against any possible trouble, owing to the activity on the Persian frontier of numerous bands of Persian brigands.

M. Isvolsky said, in reply, that he did not wish to disguise the fact that a certain uneasiness had been caused by these preparations, which had attracted not only the attention of the Russian Government, but also of His Majesty's Government. He took note, however, of the explanation and assurances.

M. Zinoview has been requested to inform the Sublime Porte of M. Isvolsky's answer. His Excellency added that you might possibly also wish to instruct Sir N. O'Connor to inform Porte that His Majesty's Government had learnt with satisfaction of communication made by Turkish Ambassador in St. Petersburg, and of the assurances which had been given to M. Isvolsky.

[5867]

No. 221.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 48.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 19, 1908.

TELEGRAM received from His Majesty's Consul at Seistan to the effect that Russian Vice-Consul states that there will shortly arrive at that place a Consul, a Military Attaché, and a doctor.

Any intention of increasing Consular staff at Siestan is denied by Russian Minister.

I have informed Government of India.

[5891]

No. 222.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 49.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 19, 1908.

GERMAN political activity.

A violent attack was recently made in the Assembly upon the Belgian Administrator of Customs, M. Mornard, who might have been dismissed had it not been that the Russian Minister and I intervened on his behalf. The opportunity has been utilized by German Chargé d'Affaires to press the Persian Government for the dismissal of all Belgian officials and the substitution for them of Germans. He stated to Belgian Chargé d'Affaires that a request to furnish Germans for this purpose has been made to him by the Persian Government.

The only certain revenue in Persia would be practically under Germany's control were the Customs to be placed in German hands.

In order to prevent this, M. de Hartwig and I propose to make the strongest representations to the Persian Government.

It might perhaps be possible to take action at Berlin also.

In four days new German Minister is expected to arrive.

[5896]

No. 223.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 19.)

(No. 50.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 19, 1908.

INTEREST on loan.

Balance plus overdue interest, pressed for by Bank, has been paid by Persian Government.

Reference is to my telegram No. 47 of yesterday.

[5918]

No. 224.

Mr. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 27.)

Sir,

Munich, February 17, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 56 of the 1st June last, giving some information respecting a certain Dr. Hugo Grothe, who was reported to be travelling in the neighbourhood of Bagdad, I have the honour to report that this gentleman having recently returned to this capital, he has been interviewed by a reporter of the Munich "Neueste Nachrichten," who publishes in that newspaper the information which he has been able to obtain from that gentleman with regard to his recent journey, and as this information may not be without some interest to you, I venture to inclose a Memorandum summarizing the substance of the interview and full translation of certain passages in it which seem to me of particular interest.

In one of these passages it is stated that Dr. Grothe visited those parts of Persia which may be called the "neutral zone," according to the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and which may now be considered to be of peculiar interest to Germany from the point of view of the Bagdad Railway question.

Another passage alludes to the favourable Germanophile current which at present exists in Persian official circles, and which opens out very favourable prospects for obtaining Concessions in Persia by Germans, such as the construction of roads, railways, &c.

The last passage to which I would draw your attention is the statement made in the Munich newspaper that Dr. Grothe received financial assistance from the Kaiser to enable him to undertake his journey.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

Inclosure in No. 224.

Memorandum.

DR. GROTHE informed the reporter of the Munich "Neueste Nachrichten" that he had just returned from an eighteen months' journey from Asia Minor. He asserted that the main object of the journey was geographical research, and to inquire into the commercial and agricultural resources of the countries he traversed. Dr. Grothe, in the main, travelled along the course which will be followed by the Bagdad Railway, and he apparently took notes of everything which might be of interest to Germany in carrying out that scheme.

Starting from Constantinople he proceeded to Eskishehir, Konieh and Eregli, the present terminus of the railway. He then caravanned across the Taurus mountains and visited Bulgarmaden, a region rich in iron ore, afterwards reaching Kaisarieh, the emporium for the whole trade of the interior of Asia Minor. He observed that German enterprise had not as yet drawn full advantage of the possibilities of that place. The chief official there of the Anatolian Railway was a Greek, a fact which seemed to annoy Dr. Grothe. He recommended the establishment in this district of a German firm with large depôts of German goods.

Several months were spent in the country inhabited by the "Awshares" and "Tscherkessen" ("Circassians") on the slopes of the Anti-Taurus. The traveller then proceeded southward, passing through Seitoun to Marash, and he expressed the hope that this latter place, with its 60,000 inhabitants—the capital of a district rich in cereals—might be connected with the main line of the Bagdad Railway. Beyond Marash he noted that the authority of the Turkish officials gradually diminished, especially outside the towns, and it seemed therefore to Dr. Grothe that the construction of the railway was all to the advantage of the Porte, as it would facilitate the collection of taxes and add to the prestige of the Government officials.

Towards the end of February Dr. Grothe became the guest of Ibrahim Pasha, the powerful Chief of the "Millikurds." Accompanied by him he travelled over ground as yet unvisited by Europeans. He reported that certain districts he passed through, especially in the neighbourhood of certain rivers, were peculiarly suitable for the cultivation of cotton. He then continued his expedition on board of a raft from Diarbekir to Mosul, where a German Consulate had recently been established, and where a good opening lies for pushing German trade. He stated that the Turkish authorities had so far done nothing to establish steam navigation on that part of the Tigris.

After a stay of some time in Bagdad and a hurried visit to the shrines of Kerbela, Dr. Grothe went to Pusht-i-kooh, passing through a country which he declared only requires irrigation works to make it extremely fertile. At this point the words of the interview are as follows:—

"Dr. Grothe's course was then directed to South-West Persia, towards that region which, in consequence of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, may be considered to be a 'neutral zone,' and which, therefore, has a peculiar interest to Germany in connection with the construction of the Bagdad Railway."

The traveller declared that he gave special attention to the trade centres of that region, such as Kermanshah, Hamadan, Nehawend, Burudjird and Sultanabad, as, if a branch line of the Bagdad Railway were carried to the Persian frontier, German trade would have a great opening before it in the places just mentioned.

The interview then continues thus:—

"If Germany, following up the Concession granted to her for the creation of the Orient Bank, acts with financial vigour in Persia, then she will in all probability secure Concessions in South-West Persia for the construction of roads, railways, &c."

At Tehran Dr. Grothe gave much attention to the political situation, with a view to ascertaining the forces at work in the new constitutional movement in Persia, his impression being that a current was running adverse to Russia.

Dr. Grothe, on his return journey to Europe, passed through Tabreez, where he found a recently established German firm, Arslan and Co., which is doing good business. He advised the appointment of a German Consul in that city to further German interests, the Russian Consul there acting at present on behalf of Germany.

In conclusion, Dr. Grothe declared that "if the persons who are directing German policy understand the present situation and avail themselves of the currents which are running friendly to Germany, they will strike at once and offer every opposition to prevent that Concessions should be granted to England and Russia; by such means Germany will avoid finding herself coming too late on some still undeveloped portion of the world."

Certain Bavarian Princes recommended Dr. Grothe to the Foreign Office in Berlin, and it is stated that the Kaiser assisted him financially to enable him to undertake his journey.

Munich, February 17, 1908.

[5944]

No. 225.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 20.)

Sir,

India Office, February 18, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 5th instant, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose a copy of a Minute by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, as to the cost involved in the proposal to obtain from the Persian Government the control by the Department of the telegraph line from Borasjun to Mohammerah.

It will be seen that the survey of the line and its temporary repairs (if they can be effected) are estimated to cost some 4,500 rupees (300*l.*), and more permanent repairs, to be carried out later, some 15,000 rupees (1,000*l.*). The cost of maintenance of the line, when in order, is estimated at 9,000 rupees (600*l.*) a-year.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 225.

Minute by Mr. Kirk.

THE Foreign Office ask for information as to the approximate cost of the proposed survey and temporary repair of the line from Borasjun to Mohammerah.

The length of this line is believed to be about 331 miles. As regards temporary repairs, the only thing that could be done would be to buy poles locally, if they can be purchased locally, and connect up the wire where it is broken. If there is no spare wire along the line to repair the breaks, and if poles cannot be obtained, this would put a stop to temporary repairs. I think the survey of the line and temporary repairs, if they can be effected, would cost about 4,500 rupees (300*l.*). There would also be the more permanent repairs, to be carried out later; but until a survey has been made it is impossible to estimate what these would cost. I should say that an expenditure of some 15,000 rupees (1,000*l.*) would be required for the purpose. As to the cost of maintenance, when the line had been put in order, I estimate it would come to 9,000 rupees (600*l.*) per annum. This estimate is for maintaining the line much as the Meshed line is maintained at present.

I desire particularly to point out that, if the survey is to take place, it should be commenced on an early date, as the summer heat in the districts through which the line passes is very great, making outdoor work almost impracticable.

February 7, 1908.

[5953]

No. 226.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 20.)

Sir,

India Office, February 19, 1908.

WITH reference to paragraph 3 of my letter of to-day's date, I am directed to inclose, to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a Secret letter from the Government of India as to the steps to be taken to give effect to the arrangement with the Russian Government for the exchange of the Meshed-Tehran and

Khaf-Nasratab telegraph lines, together with a Memorandum by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

I am also to inclose a Memorandum by the Director-in-chief on Mr. Marling's telegram No. 44 of the 13th instant, forwarded with your letter dated the 15th February, 1908, and to say that Mr. Morley concurs in Sir E. Grey's proposal to defer for the present the issue of any instructions to Mr. Marling.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 226.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Secret.)

Sir,

Fort William, January 16, 1908.

WE have the honour to address you on the subject of the Arrangement signed by Sir A. Nicolson and M. Isvolsky on the 31st August, 1907, respecting the telegraph lines between Meshed-Seistan and Meshed-Tehran. In his telegram to the Foreign Office, London, No. 301, dated the 21st October, 1907, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran, reported that the Russian Minister at Tehran had informed his Government that he considered the present moment unsuitable for approaching the Persian Government regarding the telegraph line Agreement. Mr. Marling concurred in this view. As it seems likely that no favourable opportunity will present itself at an early date for giving formal effect to the Arrangement that has been decided on, we would suggest, for your consideration, that the object aimed at in the understanding might be sufficiently secured if Great Britain and Russia transferred informally to one another the control which they now exercise respectively over the two lines in question. The transfer could be effected in each case by the withdrawal of the employés of the one Power and the substitution of a similar number of employés of the other Power in lieu of them, as we shall attempt to show in the following paragraphs.

2. *The Tehran-Meshed Line.*—Information regarding our present control over the Tehran-Meshed line is given in the letter from the India Office to the Foreign Office, dated the 14th October, 1906, and in the extract from the Meshed Diary for the 8th September, 1906, of which a copy is inclosed for facility of reference. It will be seen that the Arrangement is quite an informal one, which grew out of the measures found temporarily necessary in 1885 to secure rapid communication between Sir West-Ridgeway's Boundary Commission in Afghanistan and the Government of India. The Indo-European Telegraph Department spend annually on repairs a sum not exceeding 20,000 rupees; while the Persian Government contributes 15,000 krans for the same purpose. The line guards are paid by the Persian Government, except for a contribution from the Indian Government of 200 krans per mensem to the pay of twenty ghulams, and the signallers at intermediate stations are Persians, who also are apparently paid by the Persian Government, and who work under the control of the Persian Telegraph Ministry. As the line is managed by the Department, British signallers could presumably have been employed if this had been necessary. An Assistant Superintendent of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, with two clerks, one ghulam, and two farashes, inspects the line, and the repairs are carried out under his supervision. That Department also employs a signaller at Tehran, and two at Meshed, to deal with messages between the Legation and the Consulate-General; but, as there are also Russian signallers who work the line at stated hours both at Tehran and Meshed, this fact does not constitute any exclusive British privilege. Both at Tehran and at Meshed the wire terminates in the Indo-European Telegraph Department Office. Receipts for all classes of messages are paid into the Persian Telegraph Ministry.

3. So far, then, as the Tehran-Meshed line is concerned, the following steps would be necessary to give the Russians the same degree of control which the British at present possess :—

(a.) *Repairs.*—Russia to spend annually 20,000 rupees; to receive 15,000 krans from the Persian Government; and to employ a telegraph official of her own to inspect the line and supervise the work. There need apparently be no formal reference to the Persian Government about this. The Indo-European Telegraph Department could continue to receive 15,000 krans per annum from the Persian Government, and could

pay it over privately to the Russian Government. The Department could withdraw their Assistant Superintendent, and allow his place to be taken by a Russian.

(b.) *Signallers and Line Guards.*—The signallers at intermediate stations and line guards would remain Persians and would be paid by the Persian Government as at present, but Russia, instead of Great Britain, would have to contribute 200 krans per mensem to the pay of the ghulams. Both Great Britain and Russia would retain their own signallers at Tehran and Meshed as at present.

(c.) *Termination of Line.*—The Indo-European Telegraph Department could transfer the termination both at Tehran and Meshed to the Russian office. The Russian office could then give the wire by a commutator to the Persian and British offices at stated times, just as is done by the British office *mutatis mutandis* at present. It would seem unnecessary to consult the Persian Government about this, and it could probably be done without attracting much attention.

(d.) *Administrative Control (excepting Repairs).*—This would remain under the Persian Telegraph Ministry, as at present (*vide* Meshed Diary already quoted).

4. *The Meshed-Seistan Line.*—The Russian arrangements regarding this are indicated to some extent in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 201, dated the 21st September, 1907, to Sir E. Grey, and his despatch No. 465, dated the 10th September, 1907; and also in the Meshed Diary of the 8th September, 1906, already quoted.

(a.) *Repairs.*—Russian superintendence was only tacitly recorded by the Persian Government, and is for no fixed term. The line is the property of the Persian Government. It appears from our Consul's reports that the Russian Kniaz Vavchadze practically controls the line, but there is no very definite account of the system or of the number of employés. The Meshed Diary states that repairs are carried out under the supervision of the Russian Kniaz Vavchadze, but it is believed that the cost is defrayed by the Persian Government by means of orders in favour of Russian telegraph officials on the local Governors of Seistan and Kain. The inspecting and repairing establishment employed by Russia in September 1906 was three Inspectors, two Sub-Inspectors, four clerks, and one mechanic.

(b.) *Signallers and Line Guards.*—The line guards are paid by the Persian Government. Their number is unknown. As to the signallers, there are Persian, British, and Russian signallers, both at the terminals and at intermediate stations. The precise number and distribution of the British and Russian signallers at the time of the signature of the Convention is reported to have been as follows :—

British.—One with His Majesty's Consul, Seistan, in camp; one at Nasratabad; one at Birjand.

Russian.—Shusp, one Inspector (on leave, but has since returned); Khaf, one Inspector, one Sub-Inspector; Nasratabad, one Sub-Inspector, one signaller; Birjand, one signaller (whose post was then temporarily vacant, but has since been filled).

(c.) *Termination of Line.*—Both at Meshed and Seistan the line now terminates in Russian offices.

(d.) *Administrative Control (excepting Repairs).*—This is nominally under the Persian Telegraph Ministry (*vide* Meshed Diary of the 8th September, 1906), but seems latterly to have fallen into the hands of the Russian "Kniaz."

5. Regarding this line, the following steps seem necessary to give the British the same degree of control below Khaf which the Russians at present possess :—

(a.) *Repairs.*—The Russians could instruct the "Kniaz" to withdraw from all interference south of Khaf, and also to withdraw his Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, clerks, and mechanics from that portion of the line. The present British signallers, with some assistants, could then take their place. No formal reference to the Persian Government would apparently be needed, but it would probably be hard to arrange at present that the Persian Government should pay for repairs, as it now does, and the British Government would have to bear this charge pending further arrangements.

(b.) *Signallers and Line Guards.*—As in the converse case of the Tehran-Meshed line, it would be difficult to claim that Russian signallers should be removed from the terminal stations; but it would seem that, as the management of the line is to be transferred to the British, and with the express object of preventing friction along the Perso-Afghan frontier, Russia cannot justifiably claim to retain any signallers at intermediate stations.

(c.) *Termination of Line.*—The terminal at Seistan could be transferred to the British offices without reference to the Persian Government, in the same manner as

control was taken over by the Russians; and at the Khaf end it might be arranged that the line from Seistan should pass through a British office and thence through a Russian office.

6. Recent reports received since the conclusion of the Agreement regarding Persia show that Russian control is now being still further extended over the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line, and as we consider it to be greatly to our interest that this control should cease at an early date, we trust that it may be found possible to bring into force without delay the understanding regarding the exchange of telegraph lines by the adoption of measures such as we have indicated above.

We have, &c.
(Signed) MINTO.
KITCHENER.
H. ERLE RICHARDS.
E. N. BAKER.
C. H. SCOTT.
H. ADAMSON.
J. F. FINLAY.
J. O. MILLER.

Inclosure 2 in No. 226.

Extract from Meshed Diary No. 36 for the week ending September 8, 1906.

Tuesday, September 4.—In accordance with a Concession granted by the Persian Government to the Russians, the terminal pole of the Seistan telegraph line is to-day being removed from outside the Persian office and the wire conducted straight to the Russian office. This is, in fact, the change made by the Russian Telegraph Inspector, without authority, in June last, and which was reversed at the instance of this Consulate-General. In order to communicate with Seistan and intermediate places it will now be necessary for the Persian—and through it the British—office to work through the Russian commutator. The Russian office in Meshed has thus an identical position on the Seistan line with that of our Meshed office on the Tehran line.

As it is understood that the Russians are claiming for themselves the same privileges throughout on the Seistan line as we enjoy on the Tehran line, I give below a brief statement, in parallel columns, showing what the latter privileges are and also those now enjoyed by the Russians on the Seistan line:—

MAINTENANCE.

Tehran-Meshed Line.

"Temporarily" maintained by the Indian Government for the Persian Government, at an annual cost of 20,000 rupees. For the last three years the Persian Government has contributed 15,000 krans annually.

Repairs carried out under supervision of Russian "Kniaz." It is believed that cost is defrayed by Persian Government.

Meshed-Seistan Line.

ESTABLISHMENT.

Government of India Establishment.

One Assistant Superintendent.
Two clerks.
One "ghulam."
Two "farashes."

Line Establishment.

Paid by Persian Government.
Twenty "ghulams."
One "tafangehi."

Ten krans per mensem are contributed to the pay of each "ghulam" by the Indian Government. Above staff all work under orders of Assistant Superintendent.

Russian Establishment.

Three Inspectors.
Two Sub-Inspectors.
Four clerks.
One mechanic.

Line Establishment.

Paid by Persian Government.
Strength unknown.

With the exception of clerks mentioned above, establishments of clerks and signallers at telegraph-offices on both lines are Persian and work under Persian Telegraph Ministry, who also have the arrangement of all administrative matters except upkeep.

Control.

At Tehran and Meshed ends wire is taken into British office first, and given, through the commutator, to the Persian office, and through it to the Russian office. Under the recent Concession, Russians control the wire at the Meshed end.

Receipts.

[Receipts for all classes of messages on both lines are paid into Persian Telegraph Ministry.]

Although time-tables exist on both lines governing the use of the wires by the different offices they are not always adhered to, other arrangements, as may be mutually convenient, being made in their place. It should be noted that for six hours daily Meshed is cut off (at Shahrud) from Tehran while the latter place is in communication with Astrabad. The only privileges which the Russians seem now to lack on the Seistan line to make their position equal to ours on the Tehran line is that of paying for its maintenance and the control of the wire at the Seistan end. The former they will, perhaps, not insist on very strenuously, but it may be anticipated that efforts will be made to secure the latter. It is difficult to say, until the full scope of the Concession is known, how it will affect us as regards telegraphic communication with Seistan and intermediate places. It seems unlikely that any immediate inconvenience will be caused, though it cannot be forgotten that the Russians now have it in their power to interrupt communications when a sufficiently important occasion arises. There is also the possibility of our messages being tapped. To be done without detection this requires special instruments and more technical knowledge than is possessed by any one in the Russian office, but there is, of course, no assurance that this state of affairs will continue. The chief objection to the surrender by the Persian Government of their rights on the line probably lies in the use the Russians may make of it in increasing the number of their agents along the line and in similar ways. In this connection may be mentioned the recent report of a projected line from Pul-i-Khatun to Khaf. There is also the great impulse given to their political influence by the acquisition of this important Concession in a quarter where our interests predominate.

Our interests, on the other hand, on the Tehran-Meshed line, over which we at present possess exclusive privileges, are probably less than those of the Russians; and the question consequently suggests itself whether, after a *quid pro quo* in the shape of the Robot extension has been secured, it would not be advisable to endeavour to effect an exchange.

Inclosure 3 in No. 226.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

(No. 201.)

(Telegraphic.)

St. Petersburg, September 21, 1907.

I AM informed by the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs that Russian superintendence of the Meshed-Seistan line was only tacitly accorded by the Persian Government, and is for no fixed term. The line is the property of the Persian Government; in fact, as regards these telegraph lines, the Russians and ourselves are practically in similar positions.

Inclosure 4 in No. 226.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

(No. 465.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, September 10, 1907.

M. GOUBASTOFF handed me to-day the draft of a despatch which the Russian Government proposed to address to the Russian Minister at Tehran, provided that you concurred, in regard to the transfer of the respective British and Russian rights or

management over the Tehran-Meshed and Meshed-Seistan telegraph lines, I have the honour to transmit a copy of the document in question.

I inquired recently when I might receive the information for which I had applied in regard to the Meshed-Seistan telegraph line, and I was informed that the data which had been hitherto supplied were not sufficiently full, and that a report had been called for as to the expenses of the section from Khaf to Nasratabad. As soon as complete information had been received, a Memorandum would be communicated to me. I gathered that the superintendence of the Russian Administration over the Seistan line is *de jure* practically not much more extensive than that of the British Administration over the Tehran-Meshed line; though the Russian Administration has in fact acquired a more direct control than is exercised by the former.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure 5 in No. 226.

Draft of Despatch communicated by the Russian Government to M. de Hartwig.

EN concluant un Arrangement concernant la Perse, Arrangement entré dans le corps de la Convention Russo-Anglaise du 18 (31) Août, 1907, les Gouvernements de Russie et de la Grande-Bretagne, en vue d'éviter tout motif de conflit entre leurs intérêts dans les régions de la Perse voisines des frontières respectives de ses États, se sont engagés entre autres à ne pas rechercher de Concessions chacun dans la région touchant de près aux intérêts de l'autre.

Afin de ne pas enfreindre ce principe, les deux Gouvernements se sont vus obligés d'introduire un changement dans la position des lignes télégraphiques de Téhéran-Meshed et de Meshed-Seistan. Après un examen approfondi de cette question, il a été décidé, d'une part, que la première de ces lignes, rentrant en entier dans la région intéressant la Russie, passera dans le ressort de l'Administration Russe aux mêmes conditions auxquelles elle se trouve actuellement dans le ressort de l'Administration Anglaise; d'autre part, vu qu'une partie du télégraphe Meshed-Seistan traverse la région susmentionnée, il a été décidé que cette ligne sera divisée en deux sections à Khaf, que la section au nord de ce point ressortira de l'Administration Russe et celle au sud du même point de l'Administration Anglaise. Un Arrangement à ce sujet a été signé le 18 (31) Août, année courante, par M. Isvolsky et Sir A. Nicolson, Arrangement dont j'ai l'honneur de vous faire parvenir le texte ci-joint.

En concluant cet Arrangement, les deux Gouvernements ne pouvaient pas perdre de vue le fait que les lignes en question constituent la propriété du Gouvernement Persan, et que les droits qu'ils possèdent du Gouvernement Persan et que les droits qu'ils possèdent sur elles ne leur sont concédés que par ce dernier. Par suite, il était indispensable d'obtenir le consentement du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah à mettre à exécution les mesures prévues par l'Accord dont il s'agit, à la suite de quoi un Article y relatif a été introduit dans le texte de l'Arrangement.

En conséquence, j'ai l'honneur de vous adresser la prière de bien vouloir vous entendre avec votre collègue d'Angleterre, qui a été muni d'une instruction identique à celle-ci, afin de fixer d'un commun accord les démarches qu'il sera nécessaire de faire pour obtenir du Gouvernement Persan le consentement demandé, et de procéder à ces démarches aussitôt que cela sera possible.

En vous priant de m'informer en son temps du résultat de vos négociations à ce sujet, je saisis, &c.

Inclosure 6 in No. 226.

Mr. Marling to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.)

FOLLOWING sent to Foreign Office:—

Tehran, October 21, 1907.

"Your despatch No. 170. Russian Government have been informed by their Minister here that he considers the present moment unsuitable for approaching Persian Government on telegraph line Agreement.

"As the Assembly is still very sensitive about the Agreement and present Cabinet

is too weak to attempt to do anything without its approval, I agreed with this view. Cabinet is likely shortly to be reconstructed, but I do not anticipate that attitude of Assembly will change at early date.

Inclosure 7 in No. 226.

Government of India to Consul Kennion.

(Telegraphic.)

Simla, October 29, 1907.

TELEGRAPHS. Please report exact distribution of Russian and British signallers south of Khaf on the 31st August, date of signature of Anglo-Russian Agreement.

Inclosure 8 in No. 226.

Consul Kennion to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.)

Seistan, November 1, 1907.

I REPEAT the following telegrams for your information with reference to your telegrams of the 29th October:—

First, from Minister at Tehran to Consul in Seistan:—

"No. 102, dated 21st October. Secret. Please see the last paragraph of Spring-Rice's Circular telegram, dated 24th September, regarding the exchange of telegraph lines. We are to take the Seistan-Khaf section in exchange for the Tehran-Meshed line; the lines to be handed over in same condition as those prevailing. The Persian Government has to consent to exchange by as has (? but as moment has) been judged inopportune to approach them on the subject, it seems not improbable that the Russian signallers may be meanwhile reduced in order to reduce the number of our signallers when the exchange is effected.

"Could you ascertain the present number of Russian signallers, with names and stations if possible?"

Second, from Consul in Seistan to Minister at Tehran:—

"No. 146, dated 31st October. The following is the Russian staff:—Inspectors two—Shusp, Tukhoreli; Khaf, Kniaz Varchadze. Sub-Inspectors two—Nasratabad, Drindin; Khaf, Constantin. Signallers two—Nasratabad, Gurjenski; Birjand, Rozof. Persian Ghulambashis, two at Bandan and Khaf. Ghulams, two at each office."

As regards the European staff, I think that where the line is controlled by us, if one of the three signallers we now have were made inspector, the only addition necessary to our present staff would be a signaller at Khaf. For Persian staff one Ghulambashi and sixteen ghulams would suffice.

On 31st August staff stood as above, with this difference, that the inspector at Shusp was then on leave, but has since returned, and that the signaller's post at Birjand (which has since been filled up) was at that time temporarily vacant.

British staff on 31st August was three signallers—one with me in camp, one at Nasratabad, and one at Birjand.

Inclosure 9 in No. 226.

Memorandum by Mr. Kirk on Government of India Secret Despatch of January 16, 1908.

THE Government of India make certain proposals as to the employment of British signallers on the Tehran-Meshed line after its transfer to Russian control. The proposals are that both Great Britain and Russia retain their signallers at Tehran and Meshed as at present. The Indo-European Telegraph Department is to transfer the termination both at Tehran and Meshed to the Russian office. The Russian office can then give the use of the wire by a commutator to the British and Persian offices at stated times, just as is done by the British office *mutatis mutandis* at present. As to the

working of the Khaf-Seistan line after transfer to British control, the proposal is that the terminal at Seistan should be transferred to the British office, and at the Khaf end the line from Seistan should pass through the British office and thence through the Russian office. Taking into consideration the converse case of the Tehran-Meshed line, it would be difficult to claim that Russian signallers should be removed from the terminal stations, but the Government of India consider that as the management of the line is to be transferred to the British, with the express object of preventing friction along the Perso-Afghan frontier, Russia cannot justifiably claim to retain any signallers at intermediate stations. I understand that the British signaller at Khaf would work through to the British signaller at Meshed at stated times by a similar arrangement to that proposed for British working between Tehran and Meshed. It might be useful to find out what the views of the Russian Government are on these points. I have been told by the Indo-European Company that it is not unlikely the Company will be asked by the Russian Government to undertake the working of the Tehran-Meshed line after its transfer.

As the Indo-European Telegraph Company is one on which the British Government can put pressure, if necessary, its taking charge of the line does not appear to be against British interests, but rather in their favour.

2. It would appear to be premature at present to deal with the proposals of the Government of India. This can be done, if necessary, when the result is known of the application about to be made for the formal transfer.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

February 14, 1908.

Inclosure 10 in No. 226.

Note by Mr. Kirk.

THE tape instrument referred to will be one that marks the dots and dashes of the Morse alphabet on a piece of tape. The tape forms a record of the message sent. The instrument could be used to take a record of a British message passing over the wires. Possibly the wish to place it in a separate room is with some purpose of the kind. It would be safer to object to the separate room, and this could be done on the plea that it would be a departure from the *status quo*.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

February 14, 1908.

[5952]

No. 227.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 20.)

Sir,

India Office, February 19, 1908.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant as to—

- (1.) The transfer to Russia of the rights now enjoyed by Great Britain over the Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line.
- (2.) The exchange of the Meshed-Tehran for the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph line.

2. A Minute by the Director-in-Chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department discussing the subject, and furnishing the information asked for in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 25 and Mr. Marling's telegram No. 42, referred to in your letter, is inclosed; also copies of the Conventions of 1865 and 1872.*

3. As regards the proposal to treat the two subjects separately, there could, in Mr. Morley's opinion, be no objection to the adoption of this course if priority were secured for the question of the exchange of the Meshed-Tehran and Khaf-Nasratabad lines; otherwise there seems a risk that the exchange may be unduly delayed. On the other hand, there are advantages in M. Isvolsky's suggestion that the subjects should be discussed with the Persian Government as a whole. Nor need this procedure necessarily prevent the separation—which would certainly be most convenient—of the question of the steps to be taken to obtain the consent of the

* Not printed.

Persian Government to the exchange of the Meshed-Tehran line for the Khaf-Seistan line from that of the measures required to carry the exchange into effect after their consent has been given. A separate communication on this last point is being addressed to you in reply to your letter of the 15th February.

4. As regards Mr. Marling's question as to the agency by which the Khaf-Seistan line should be worked in the event of its passing under British control, I am to refer to paragraph 6 of Mr. Kirk's Minute. It would be inadvisable, in Mr. Morley's opinion, not to retain, at all events for a time, the agency of the Government of India's Telegraph Department, though hereafter it may be found desirable, on grounds of policy, as well as of unity of telegraph administration in Persia, to transfer the charge to the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

5. As regards the Tehran-Khanikin line, Mr. Morley concurs in the view that the exchange of Memoranda suffices, without further formalities, as a record of the agreement arrived at by the two Governments. He also agrees, in view of the terms of the Memorandum of the 23rd June last, that the Russian Government are under no obligation to postpone action in respect of the Tehran-Khanikin line till the question of the prolongation of the Concessions of the Indo-European Telegraph Department is settled. Criticism, however, may be roused in certain quarters if the two transactions are not effected simultaneously, and it is, perhaps, not prudent altogether to ignore the possibility indicated in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram that, if a settlement is delayed, a third Power may obtain in the immediate future, without our knowledge, the reversion of the rights conferred on us by the present Concessions, on their expiration in 1925. Mr. Morley therefore thinks it worth considering whether the Russian Government should not be informed that it will be necessary for us to raise the question of the prolongation of our Concessions as soon as they raise that of the Tehran-Khanikin line, even though, as seems not improbable, the result may be that the Persian Government will refuse to entertain the proposals either of ourselves or of Russia. In any case Mr. Morley considers it would be desirable to represent to the Russian Government the advantages to them of postponing action in respect of the Khanikin line till the question of the prolongation of the Concessions of the Indo-European Telegraph Department has been settled.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 227.

Minute on Foreign Office letter of February 13, 1908.

I THINK the Secretary of State may concur in the opinion that it would be more convenient to deal with the question of the exchange of the Meshed-Seistan and the Tehran-Meshed lines separately from that of the transfer of the rights over the Khanikin line. In the former case the proposal is one for an alteration of certain working arrangements on telegraph lines, while in the other case the question is one of the transfer of recognized rights over a line.

2. With regard to the transfer of the rights now enjoyed by Great Britain over the Tehran-Khanikin line, the exchange that took place in St. Petersburg of the Memoranda referred to in the Foreign Office letter appears to have settled the question as between the British and Russian Governments.

3. The telegram No. 25, dated St. Petersburg, 9th February, 1908, puts forward certain proposals for approaching the Persian Government regarding the transfer of the control of the telegraph lines named therein. These proposals appear to me to be sound, except as regards raising the question at the present time of the transfer of our rights over the Khanikin line. It appears to me the objection to raising the question of the transfer of the Khanikin line is this: Our hold over it rests on the 1872 Telegraph Convention, which, under renewals that have been agreed to, remains in force until 1925. But we are about to approach the Persian Government for a further renewal up to 1945. If, therefore, the transfer of the line is arranged after this further renewal has been obtained, the Russians will gain control of the line till 1945 instead of 1925, which would presumably be more desirable than for the shorter period. An arrangement, by which the question of the transfer of the line was to remain in abeyance until the question of the renewal of the British Concessions had been settled with the Persian Government, might possibly enlist the active assistance of the Russian Government in our favour in the matter, seeing that they would also

gain by the renewal. The delay would not be great by this course being adopted, and the advantage to the Russian Government might be considerable.

4. The telegram of the 9th February further asks when the Tehran-Khanikin line was made over to the Persians, and for what reason this was done. This line was originally constructed to form part of a connection between Bagdad and Tehran. It was believed that the line between Bagdad and Fao would not be allowed to work owing to the unruly state the country it passed through was in, and therefore it was necessary to provide an alternative route through Tehran and Bushire for messages between Europe and India via Turkey. It was found, however, contrary to expectation, that the route between Fao and Bagdad worked comparatively well, thus rendering the route through Persia of little value. On the latter line the perpetual disturbances on the Turco-Persian frontier, and the mutual jealousies of the Turks and Persians, interfered with communication. The Russian route to Julfa, the alternative to the Turkish route, had been improved in speed and accuracy of working, and the Julfa-Tehran line had been strengthened by the introduction of a few European signallers. Finally it was thought that the Concessions obtained by Messrs. Siemens for what is now the Indo-European Company's line would provide an efficient line between England and Tehran. Accordingly, in March 1868, the Khanikin line was made over to the Persian Administration to be worked by their own officials. From that time to this it would not have paid us to renew our control over the line, and we have not done so.

5. It may be useful to add that on the 14th June, 1906, the Persian Government signed an Agreement with the Indo-European Telegraph Company that they had no objection to the Company taking over the Khanikin line from the British Government, and, in the event of this being done, that the conditions for its working were to be settled by a Convention between the Persian Government and the Company. This shows that in 1906 the Persian Government were not averse to the transfer of the British rights over the Khanikin line, and it only seems necessary for the Russian Government to obtain from the Persian Government the recognition of the transfer to them of the British rights. But, as I have pointed out in a previous part of this note, it appears advisable to avoid raising the question of this transfer until it is settled whether the Persian Government will renew or not the British Telegraph Concessions.

6. In Mr. Marling's telegram No. 41 of the 8th February, 1908, he asks by whom is it now proposed that Russian obligations should be formally accepted—by the Indo-European Telegraph Department or by the Indian Telegraph Department. As the only line to be transferred to us is the Khaf-Nasratabad section, and as there are three signallers of the Indian Telegraph Department employed on the section, the simplest arrangement is for that Department to take over charge of the line. It might be stated, however, that the charge of the line might eventually be made over to the Indo-European Telegraph Department, as it is desirable for administrative purposes that all the telegraph lines with which the British are connected in Persia should be in the care of the Department, with its head-quarters at Tehran.

7. It would be premature to discuss the details of the arrangements to give effect to the exchange of the two lines. This can be done when the consent of the Persian Government to the exchange has been obtained. See my Minute of the 14th February on Government of India letter of the 16th January, 1908.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

February 14, 1908.

[5969]

No. 228.

Imperial Bank of Persia to Foreign Office.—(Received February 20.)

Sir, 25, Abchurch Lane, London, February 19, 1908.
I HAVE the honour to forward, for the information of the Secretary of State, a copy of a letter I have to-day addressed to the India Office in regard to the Nasratabad (Seistan) office of the bank.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. NEWELL, Manager.

Inclosure in No. 228.

Imperial Bank of Persia to India Office.

Sir, 25, Abchurch Lane, London, February 19, 1908.
I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 5th instant, inclosing a draft for 1,500l., being the amount of the subsidy payable for the year ended the 20th September, 1907, on account of the Nasratabad (Seistan) branch of the bank, for which I am much obliged.

With reference to the final paragraph of your letter, I am requested by the Board of Directors, as we have now entered on the last year of the agreed arrangement, to inquire whether it is the wish of the Government that the Nasratabad (Seistan) branch be maintained, as in that case it will be necessary to augment the subsidy by a sum sufficient to cover the loss now annually borne by the bank. The branch was established on the initiative of His Majesty's Government, and the Directors are anxious to meet the wishes of the India Office and Foreign Office in the matter, provided the subsidy is sufficient to cover the cost of the branch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. NEWELL, Manager.

[6020]

No. 229.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 43.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 20, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following from Mr. Wratislaw, No. 17 of the 19th instant:—

"With reference to my telegram No. 16 of the 13th instant, the Turkish Commissioner declares that the fundamental difference of opinion between the two Commissioners respecting the interpretation to be placed on Article III of the Treaty of Erzeroum must be referred to Constantinople. The Persian Commissioner declines to accept his suggestion to go to Van to await the reply.

"There has been a further exchange of Memoranda, but the only new matter in them is a categorical demand on the part of the Turks that 'you should put an end to your interference with our territory and tribes in the Kurdistan districts between Suleimanieh and Beyadzid, Kotur being excepted.'"

[6003]

No. 230.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 51.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 20, 1908.

IMPERIAL Bank of Persia.

I learn very confidentially that Mr. Rabino, Manager of the Imperial Bank, has sent in his resignation.

Reference is to your despatch No. 6, Confidential, of the 22nd January.

[6004]

No. 231.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 20.)

(No. 52.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 20, 1908.

REQUEST for German Customs officials was probably made by Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh, President of the Assembly. The Minister for Foreign Affairs denies that any application was made to the German Legation.

Please refer to my telegram No. 49 of the 19th February.

[5891]

No. 232.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 51.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 20, 1908.

PERSIAN Customs and Baron von Richthofen's action.

You should communicate substance of telegram from Tehran, No. 49 of yesterday's date, to Minister for Foreign Affairs; and you should, whilst inquiring as to his views, explain that strong representations to Persian Government are the only steps we consider opportune at present. We would suggest that Mr. Marling and M. de Hartwig should be instructed to warn the Persians that the placing of Customs administration in the hands of the subjects of any Great Power cannot possibly have our consent, seeing that for the service of the loans we hold a lien upon the customs; if they do not comply within a short period with our request and withdraw the request made to Baron von Richthofen to provide German officials, the Russian and British Governments will have to concert measures to secure that their wishes shall be complied with.

It is important that I should receive an immediate reply.

[6004]

No. 233.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 55.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 20, 1908.

PERSIAN Customs. With reference to my telegram No. 51 of to-day.

The further information contained in telegram No. 52 from Tehran renders it advisable to leave to Mr. Marling's and M. de Hartwig's discretion the question as to whether representations should be made to the Persian Government as proposed.

[5900]

No. 234.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 20, 1908.

PERSIAN frontier. Please refer to St. Petersburg telegram No. 29 of yesterday.

We are glad to hear of the assurances that the Turkish Representative has given to M. Isvolsky, but we cannot help feeling seriously anxious as to what may happen in the future, seeing that Persian territory has actually been invaded and occupied by the Turks, and that we have received reports of extensive military preparations made by them.

You should convey the substance of the above to the Porte.

[6052]

No. 235.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 21.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 18th February, relative to the capture of the Dayir pirates.

India Office, February 20, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 235.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, February 18, 1908.

PLEASE refer to letter to Commander-in-chief of the 22nd December from Commander of "Highflyer." Pirates in Persian Gulf. It is proposed by Foreign

Office that appreciation of services of Khan of Bander Rigi should be expressed to Persian Government, and it is suggested that your Government should make him a small present. I shall be glad to know whether you concur.

Appreciation of Captian Hickley's services has been communicated by Foreign Office to Admiralty. Unless you see any objection, you should make similar communication to Resident in Persian Gulf.

[6129]

No. 236.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 31.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, February 21, 1908.

INSTRUCTIONS to Sir N. O'Connor in regard to Turkish military preparations. I gave substance of your telegram No. 34 of the 20th instant to M. Isvolsky to-day. He is also telegraphing them to M. Zinoviev.

(Repeated to Constantinople.)

[6130]

No. 237.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 32.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, February 21, 1908.

GERMAN activity in Tehran. Your telegrams Nos. 51 and 55 of yesterday's date, M. de Hartwig will receive similar instructions from his Government to those given in your telegram No. 51.

M. Isvolsky concurs in proposal to leave it to the discretion of the two Representatives as to whether representation should be delivered.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[6126]

No. 238.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 53.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 21, 1908.

GHEMSEDDIN BEY, the Turkish Ambassador, left Tehran to-day. His recall was reported by Sir N. O'Connor in the last paragraph of his telegram No. 39 of the 10th instant.

[4957]

No. 239.

Foreign Office to Treasury.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 21, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th November, 1907, on the subject of the advance of 300,000l. made in two instalments to the Persian Government by the Government of India in 1903 and 1904.

I am to inform you that Sir E. Grey, after consultation with His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, sees no objection to bringing to the notice of Parliament the action which His Majesty's Government have taken in this matter, and I am to solicit an expression of the views of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury as to the manner in which the communication should be made.

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that, in view of the absence of any papers which could conveniently be laid on the subject, any explanation given should take the form of a Statement, and that such Statement should set forth the reasons which have hitherto rendered inexpedient the publication of the details of this transaction.

I am to transmit to you herewith, for submission to their Lordships, copy of a Memorandum prepared at the India Office,* outlining a procedure for the adjustment

* See Inclosure in No. 181.

between the Imperial and Indian Exchequers of any liabilities which may be consequent on the advance.

It will be observed that under the arrangement proposed in this Memorandum, the Persian Government will not be charged interest on any instalment that is overdue for a shorter period than one year, and that no claim will be made on Imperial funds in respect of temporary and comparatively trifling losses such as that occasioned by the delay of six months in the payment of interest which was granted to that Government in April last.

With regard to the inquiry contained in the penultimate paragraph of your letter under reply, relative to the manner in which the suspension of the interest payment will affect the arrangement entered into with the Imperial Bank of Persia, I am to point out that this matter is fully dealt with in the India Office Memorandum, and with regard to the question raised in the last paragraph, I am to state that their Lordships are correct in concluding that the present correspondence has no reference to the advance of 200,000*l.* made in 1906 to the Persian Government by the Imperial and Indian Governments which formed part of an Anglo-Russian loan of 400,000*l.*

Sir E. Grey is of opinion that the scheme proposed by the India Office offers a satisfactory solution of the question under discussion, and I am to state that if their Lordships share this view, the necessary steps will be taken by that Department to give effect to it.

I am to add that, according to telegraphic reports which have just been received from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, the Persian Government have now paid the overdue interest on this loan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[6250]

No. 240.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 22.)

(No. 74.)
(Despatch.) P.
Sir,

Constantinople, February 17, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 31 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to report that until we see how the negotiations in progress on the frontier shape themselves, it is not possible to define the precise claims of the Turks.

With perhaps the single exception of Passova, they do not openly lay claim to any territory outside the disputed zone, but their action, which seems to cover all ground occupied by Sunni tribes, does not correspond with their theory. Bribery, too, and other inducements are being employed to persuade these tribes to accept the protection of the Ottoman Government.

I again made strong representations to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the 15th instant, and pointed out to his Excellency that according to my information the Turkish Commander in the neighbourhood of Soujboulak was once more inciting the Kurds of that district against the Persians, and that there was a danger of serious complications resulting from their present policy of aggression, especially round Soujboulak.

Yesterday the Sublime Porte, in a long Report to the Palace, urged that a frontier within the contested zone should be accepted, and that it was not expedient to raise ancient claims of a date previous to the Treaty of Erzeroum, for, according to its verbal professions, the Porte adheres to that Treaty, and desires by means of negotiations with the Persians eventually to find a frontier-line within the disputed zone. Instructions to the Turkish Commissioner are, however, sent from the Palace, which was seriously occupied with the question yesterday.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[6408]

No. 241^o.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 92.)
Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 21, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 77 of the 12th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation in French of an official announcement which was published in this morning's newspapers in regard to the military preparations which it was said were being made both by Russia and Turkey in view of the possibility of an armed conflict between the two Powers.

From the inclosed announcement it will be seen that an official denial is given to the reports which were in circulation as to a mobilization of Russian troops or a concentration of Russia's forces in the Caucasus.

It will be seen further that the Turkish Ambassador has been instructed to explain to the Russian Government that the measures which Turkey has taken have been solely for the protection of the Turkish frontier from possible danger from Persia, and that the relations between Turkey and Russia are as friendly as ever.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 241^o.

Extract from the "Journal de Saint-Petersbourg" of February 8 (21), 1908.

L'AGENCE Télégraphique de Saint-Petersbourg fait la communication suivante:—

"Les renseignements donnés par la presse concernant des préparatifs de guerre, faits tant par la Russie que par la Turquie, ont donné naissance à des bruits alarmants sur la possibilité d'un conflit armé entre ces deux Puissances.

"Nous sommes autorisés à déclarer que tous les bruits annonçant la mobilisation de certaines troupes, le transport au sud, et la concentration des troupes dans le Transcaucasie, sont absolument faux. La Russie ne prend donc aucune mesure extraordinaire, relativement aux troupes, sur la frontière Turque.

"Quant à la Turquie, à ce que nous savons de source certaine, elle vient, de sa propre initiative, de confirmer officiellement le démenti, déjà publié par l'intermédiaire de l'Agence 'Correspondenz-Bureau,' opposé par elle aux bruits selon lesquels elle ferait des préparatifs militaires près de notre frontière. L'Ambassadeur de Turquie à Saint-Petersbourg a été chargé par son Gouvernement de déclarer au Ministre Russe des Affaires Étrangères, que la Turquie n'a pris que les mesures nécessaires pour assurer la sécurité de ses frontières du côté de la Perse, en vue de l'agitation qui règne parmi les Kurdes qui se trouvent près de la frontière; qu'elle n'a fait point de préparatifs militaires dans la région Caucasienne et qu'elle est, comme précédemment, pénétrée de bons sentiments à l'égard de la Russie.

"Ainsi, la possibilité d'un conflit armé entre la Russie et la Turquie est niée assez clairement par les bonnes intentions et les sentiments exprimés tant d'un côté que de l'autre."

[6233]

No. 241.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 22.)

Sir,

India Office, February 21, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 14th instant as to the retention at Shiraz of the sowars of the Consular guard who should have been relieved last November, I am directed to say that, having regard to the continuance of the present insecurity and to the probability of fresh disturbances in the spring, reported by Mr. Marling, Mr. Secretary Morley considers that it will be necessary, unless an unexpected change in the situation takes place, to retain the men for the full period of six months covered by the arrangement with the Treasury.

The question of their further retention need not perhaps be decided at present, but might be considered later on.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[6465]

No. 242.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 45.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 24, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

His Majesty's Consul-General at Urmia telegraphs under date of the 21st that Tahir Pasha has informed him that he considers his mission accomplished, as the Turco-Persian Commission are not competent to decide on the interpretation to be placed on Article III of the Treaty of Erzeroum, to which he has reduced the frontier question. This point must be left to their Governments. He therefore proposes to leave Urmia, and my remonstrances have only elicited a promise not to start for a week.

Tahir Pasha now assures me that he is convinced of the Turkish ownership of Soujboulak. Unless instructions to remain are forthcoming I fear he will persist in withdrawing, and leave the frontier question in much the same state as he found it.

[6466]

No. 243.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 46.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 24, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

With reference to my immediately preceding telegram of to-day's date, I have to report that the Porte give the following explanations in reply to my inquiries:—

They allege that the Persian Commissioner declined to discuss the boundary unless the Turkish Commissioner gave an undertaking concerning Soujboulak, to which Tahir Pasha replied that his competence did not extend to the action of the Turkish Commander, and threatened if his Persian colleague persisted in his attitude, which rendered his further stay at Urmia of no use, to withdraw to Van.

Mr. Wratishaw's account is not confirmed by the Persian Ambassador, and, according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Turkish Commissioner has been instructed to remain at Urmia.

[6528]

No. 244.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 54.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 24, 1908.

THE Agent of Mr. Stevens, Vice-Consul at Tabreez, sends from Miandoab the following information, which has also been repeated to Urumia and Constantinople, respecting the Turco-Persian frontier.

[1563]

Persian authorities will shortly return to Sujbulak. On the morning of the 22nd instant the Turkish Commander and Turkish troops left Sujbulak for Pasva.

[5787]

No. 245.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

OIL Syndicate.

Foreign Office, February 24, 1908.

Please refer to your telegram No. 40 of the 8th instant.

Syndicate agree that the best solution is for the Manager to pay the guards direct, provided Lorimer can obtain permission from the Khans. They observe, however, that payment made to the latter is not only for safeguarding Oil Syndicate's people and property, but also as compensation for use of Khans' country.

[5417]

No. 246.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1908.

WITH reference to the letter from this Office of the 7th September, 1907, relative to the appointment of a Military Attaché to His Majesty's Consulate-General at Meshed, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* inquiring whether any decision has been reached as to the permanency of this appointment.

I am to request you to draw the attention of Mr. Secretary Morley to the opinion expressed by Sir Cecil Spring-Rice in his despatch No. 168 of the 24th July, 1907, copy of which was inclosed in the letter under reference and indorsed by Mr. Marling in his despatch No. 223 of the 9th October of the same year (see Persia, Confidential Print of the 28th October, section 15).

I am to add that Sir E. Grey is of opinion that this appointment should be maintained, and that he would be glad to receive early information as to the conclusion which may be arrived at on the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[6653]

No. 247.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 25.)

(No. 55.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, February 25, 1908.

SITUATION on Turco-Persian frontier.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs thanks His Majesty's Government for the success of action taken with regard to Sujbulak.

Orders have been sent to Firman Firma to send thither the ex-Governor of Urmi with instructions to act with moderation.

[5428]

No. 248.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

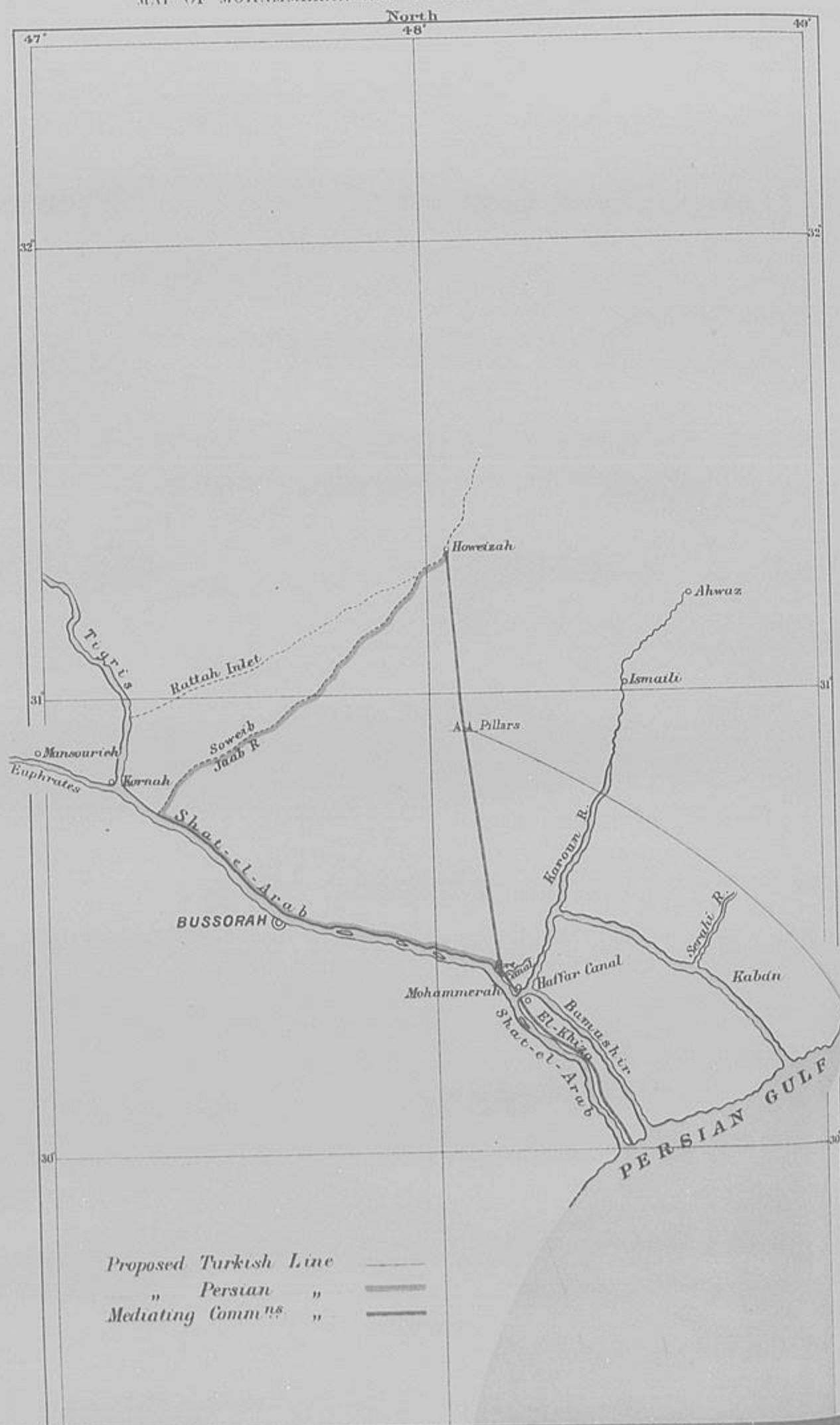
Foreign Office, February 25, 1908.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 17 of the 28th ultimo, in which you forward telegraphic correspondence with His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire relative to the apprehensions of the Sheikh of Mohammerah in regard to recent developments on the Turco-Persian frontier.

I concur in your opinion that a gun-boat need not be sent to the Shatt-el-Arab

APPENDIX B.

MAP OF MOHAMMERAH AND DISTRICT PREPARED IN 1850.



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under existing conditions, and I consider that when an attack appears more imminent the precise action to be taken by His Majesty's Government can be determined.

It would, however, be advisable, in order to allay the Sheikh's apprehensions, to inform him that His Majesty's Government are fully alive to the situation, but that they do not anticipate Turkish aggression in the neighbourhood of Mohammerah, and you should instruct Major Cox accordingly.

A copy of a despatch which I have addressed to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople on the subject is inclosed for your information.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[5428]

No. 249.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 75.)

Foreign Office, February 25, 1908.

Sir,

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,† relative to the apprehensions of the Sheikh of Mohammerah in regard to recent developments on the Turco-Persian frontier.

As you are aware, His Majesty's Government have been content to allow the Russian Government, as being more closely concerned, to take the lead in regard to making any proposals for arresting the Turkish encroachments so long as they are confined to the northern portion of the frontier; but it is desirable that your Excellency should clearly understand that the position would be materially altered if there were to be an advance of Ottoman troops to the south, more especially in the neighbourhood of Mohammerah. In this district His Majesty's Government are not prepared to recognize any other frontier than that laid down by the mediating Commissioners in 1850, as indicated in red on the accompanying sketch map; and in this connection I may recall the admission made by the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs to Her Majesty's Ambassador on the 18th November, 1893, to the effect that "the Turkish Government laid no claim whatever to Mohammerah."

Any disturbance of the *status quo* at Mohammerah would affect British interests, and might not improbably lead to the active intervention of His Majesty's Government, who have given the Sheikh certain assurances in regard to his territory.

Your Excellency should accordingly instruct His Majesty's Consuls at Bagdad and Bussorah to furnish by telegraph early information of any aggressive designs in the district in question.

A copy of a despatch which I have addressed to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran is inclosed for your information.‡

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

No. 250.

[Nil.]

[6676]

No. 251.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 23.)

Tehran, February 8, 1908.

Sir,

AS I had the honour to inform you in my despatch No. 12 of the 27th ultimo, I instructed Captain Lorimer to notify to the Bakhtiari Khans the discrepancy, in the claimant's favour, of some 900 krans existing between the revised claim in respect of Messrs. Lynch Brothers' construction account for the Ahwaz-Ispahan road and that actually presented to them by Captain Lorimer.

I have just learnt from the latter by telegraph that a reply to this notification has been received from the Chiefs to the effect that they will pay the amount if the revised claim "is sent from Tehran and is made evident."

Captain Lorimer therefore regards the situation as satisfactory, and is of opinion

* No. 249.

† No. 205.

‡ No. 248.

that no further action is called for until he receives the revised account, which should, as a matter of fact, be now in his possession.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[6677]

No. 252.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 24.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 14, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 239 of the 5th November last I have the honour to report that on the 30th ultimo, at the request of the manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia, I applied to the Persian Government for a minting contract for the Bank for the same amount as that specified in the contract concluded in November last. Having occasion to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs on other matters on the 30th ultimo, I expressed the hope that the Bank's rights in such matters were now fully recognized, and that no unnecessary delay would be made. Mushir-ed-Dowleh was obviously uneasy; he said he would do his best to arrange the question, but feared, for reasons which I could not elicit from him, that difficulties would be made, and he suggested that I should speak with the Minister of Finance on the subject. I said that it seemed to me to be quite useless to do so, for the point of view of the Legation, which His Majesty's Government had entirely approved, was perfectly well known to the Persian Government, but that, as he suggested, I would certainly see Nizam-es-Sultaneh.

On the 1st instant I called on the Finance Minister and went over the old ground with him. He said that he and the Government were powerless in the matter. The question had been referred to the Finance Committee of the Assembly, which would in due course give its decision. Ministers were now entirely dependent on these Committees, and the suspicion with which their every act was watched was such that without the permission of the Medjlis they hardly dared order their carriages. I said that the present question was not one which could possibly admit of discussion, and I trusted to his Excellency to see that the Bank's rights were promptly recognized. Nizam-es-Sultaneh replied that there would certainly be some opposition to the Bank's demands, as the Assembly had recently decided to limit to two crores of tomans (1,000,000 tomans) the amount of silver which could be coined in any one year, and that this limit had already been reached. I said that no law could affect the Bank's rights. The Bank was a bank of issue, and its first obligation was to secure its note issue; this was an inevitable corollary of its Concession, and no law made subsequently to that Concession could be invoked against it. By dint of urgent insistence Nizam-es-Sultaneh was at last induced to understand and admit the point, and I told him that I counted on his Excellency to see that this was made clear to the Finance Committee of the Assembly. His Excellency, however, urged that I should explain this point to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and I accordingly addressed to Mushir-ed-Dowleh the note of which a copy is inclosed.

My conversations with the two Ministers made it clear that a good deal of opposition was to be apprehended. The position of the Persian Government was, however, singularly weak. About the same time that the Bank obtained its contract with the Mint in November, contracts were also made with private bankers for an aggregate amount which completed the limit of 1,000,000 tomans above mentioned. In spite of this, however, the Mint has been coining silver for private persons who have no contracts authorized by the Government. I told Mushir-ed-Dowleh that this had come to my knowledge, and he of course denied it; but as my information was derived through the French Minister from the French assayer in the employ of the Mint, there can be no reasonable doubt of its authenticity. Besides this, the Mint, which is at present working very inefficiently, has failed to deliver, within the proper time, the quantities of coin specified in the Bank's contract of last November, and has even been executing contracts of a later date.

Further interviews with the Minister for Foreign Affairs showed that the opposition of the Assembly was stubborn, and as I understood from Mr. Rabino that the contract was somewhat urgently required by the Bank, I told Mushir-ed-Dowleh on the 8th instant that unless I received a satisfactory reply within a few days, I should be obliged to report the circumstances of the case to you, Sir, and request instructions.

On the 12th instant I again urged the question on his Excellency's attention, and at last succeeded in eliciting from him the admission that the real opposition came from one or two wealthy Deputies—his Excellency told me confidentially that they are Muinet-Tujjar and Amin-uz-Zerb—who coveted for themselves the large profits the Bank is supposed to make on these contracts. I told his Excellency that this explanation, though it was quite what I expected, would scarcely be a valid excuse in the eyes of His Majesty's Government for a refusal to recognize the Bank's right.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 252.

Mr. Marling to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Your Excellency,

Tehran, February 6, 1908.

WITH reference to my note of the 30th January, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I understand from a conversation which I had recently with his Excellency the Minister for Finance that objections may be raised to the conclusion of the Minting contract of the Imperial Bank of Persia on the ground that the National Assembly has decided that the amount of silver coinage to be issued in any one year shall not exceed two crores of tomans, and that this mintage has already been reached this year.

I desire to point out to your Excellency that this decision cannot in any way affect the rights of the Bank, explicit or implied, under its Concession. That Concession was the outcome of an agreement between the Government of His Majesty the Shah on the one side and the Imperial Bank of Persia on the other, and it must be clear to your Excellency that an agreement made between two parties cannot subsequently be altered by one of them except with the consent of the other. The Persian Government cannot, therefore, on the grounds of a decision of the Parliament, not even in virtue of a law, refuse to recognize the right of the Bank to coin such quantity of the standard currency of the country as the Bank may deem necessary to secure its notes issued in virtue of its Concession.

I have the honour to request that your Excellency will use all diligence to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion, as, failing a favourable reply, I shall be reluctantly compelled to report all the circumstances to my Government.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[6678]

No. 253.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 25.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 14, 1908.

ON the 7th instant there was a somewhat heated debate in the Assembly over the arrival of a party of Russian Cossacks at Ardebil for the increase of the Consular guard, and in the course of it M. Mornard, the Belgian Administrator of the Customs, was accused of having permitted the men to cross the frontier, and a similar complaint was made in regard to his conduct when the additional men for our Consular guard at Ahwaz arrived at Mohammerah. M. Mornard was, perhaps, guilty of a technical error in not first consulting his chief, the Minister of Commerce, but as Kaim Makam has only twice visited his Department since he received his portfolio six weeks ago, and then only to inquire whether there were any funds he could finger, there is a good deal to be said in his defence. M. Mornard, in fact, did not give permission for the men to pass at all; he merely, in reply to the request usual in such circumstances, instructed the local customs manager to allow their arms and baggage to pass duty free, and as the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs had been in both cases duly notified of the arrival of the men, obviously the responsibility lay with his Excellency, and not with M. Mornard. Mushir-ed-Dowleh, though present in the House, lacked the courage to take the blame—if any was due—upon himself, and Kaim Makam seized the opportunity to try to be rid of an honest official who stood in the way

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of his Excellency's speculations, and he urged the House to vote the dismissal of M. Mornard. The President of the Assembly happening to call on me an hour or so later told me that the incident, of which I had just received a report, was of no importance, but, hearing from the Russian Minister that the decision of the Assembly would be carried into effect, I agreed at his suggestion to write privately to Mushir-ed-Dowleh protesting against the dismissal of M. Mornard as calculated to create trouble in future between our escorts and the Customs officials. The following day the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires informed me that Kaim Makam had that morning dismissed M. Mornard, and asked me if I would protest against it. I agreed without hesitation, and suggested that M. de Warzée should also invite M. de Hartwig's assistance. Later in the afternoon the Russian Minister sent his first dragoman to see me and, as I had an appointment with Mushir-ed-Dowleh, we went together to see his Excellency. We urged our views strongly on his Excellency, who said he had not heard of M. Mornard's dismissal, and was much surprised at the news, as it had been agreed by the Ministers the day before to take no action for the moment. He promised to do his best to obtain the reinstatement of M. Mornard. After M. Batiouchkoff had left, I insisted that Mushir-ed-Dowleh should at once take measures to prevent Kaim Makam from appropriating the custom-house funds, from which the interest on our loan is to be paid. It is a significant comment on Kaim Makam's reputation that Mushir-ed-Dowleh took no exception to my request, but promised to write at once to him and also to the Minister of Finance in the same sense.

Early the next day Mushir-ed-Dowleh informed me that the Cabinet had decided to reinstate M. Mornard, but that it would not be done for a few days, as it was desirable to avoid an appearance of conflict between the Ministers and the Assembly. He also gave a similar assurance to the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires. I have since learnt from M. Mornard himself that he had not actually been dismissed, but that he had only been told of the decision of the Assembly verbally by Kaim Makam.

I have thought it necessary to take a somewhat strong line in this matter, as the retention of M. Mornard at the head of the Customs is particularly desirable; and the fact that the entry of our guards was also dragged into the debate, though the real occasion of it was the arrival of the Russian Cossacks for the Ardebil Consulate, gave the required pretext. If M. Mornard should be removed on a frivolous pretext, it is not impossible that all the Belgians in the Customs service would resign, as they would feel that a great encouragement would have been given to the jealous intriguers by whom they are surrounded. In that case the guarantee of the interest on the British loans secured on the customs receipts of the south would practically vanish. Even if matters did not go so far as this, it would be a great misfortune that M. Mornard should be removed from his present position. He is one of the few Belgians whose conduct has been quite irreproachable. He is hard-working, honest, zealous, and has never shown any desire to mix in political questions. He would probably be replaced by M. Wibier, who seems to be transferring his sympathies from the Russian to the German Legation, or M. Molitor, whose attitude in the Pasand Khan question has of late been very unsatisfactory. I should be sorry to see M. Mornard replaced by either of these gentlemen, and of course to fill the post by a Persian would mean, under the present Ministers, a renewal of the old régime of speculation and fraud—I say under the present Ministers, for I understand that the opportunities for fraud have so much increased since they came into office that the revenues of the Gulf customs have shown a marked diminution, though the volume of trade is practically unchanged.

I hear there has been a movement on foot to secure M. Mornard's post for M. Priem, and it is, I believe, the fact that the German Chargé d'Affaires has sent in a Memorandum to the Shah eulogizing that gentleman's high qualities. It is scarcely probable, however, that even the Medjliss will stultify itself so far as to allow M. Priem to re-enter a service from which he was dismissed a year ago.

M. de Hartwig has also made strong representations on M. Mornard's behalf, but from the tone in which Mushir-ed-Dowleh spoke to me on the subject yesterday it seemed to me that his Excellency was not confident that M. Mornard would altogether regain his old position. From an account which M. Mornard gave me of a conversation which he had with Nizam-es-Saltaneh and Kaim Makam, it would seem pretty clear that the former desires to get the Customs under his own control, and that he will not be averse to ridding himself altogether of the European element in that Administration. M. Mornard seems to be quite convinced that such is the case, and I propose to call on the Minister at an early date and point out to his

Excellency the very unfavourable view which His Majesty's Government would take of such action.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[6679]

No. 254.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 26.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, with reference to my telegram No. 19 of the 16th January, copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire forwarding copies of correspondence which has passed between Captain Lorimer and Mr. Reynolds, local Manager of the Oil Syndicate, respecting the payment of the instalment due to the Bakhtiari Khans in November last.

It is satisfactory to note Captain Lorimer's opinion as to the Khans' frame of mind, and, in order to exact the full profit out of these unusual circumstances, it will be necessary to recover compensation for the pilferings at the oil camps, and if possible to effect a satisfactory settlement of the guards question, which, as I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 40 of the 8th instant, I suggested to Captain Lorimer as an expedient precaution, before relinquishing the leverage furnished by the retention of the November instalment.

In pursuance, however, of Captain Lorimer's recommendations to Mr. Reynolds, I have authorized His Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan to sanction the payment by the bank of the later instalment due on the 15th February, and trust that in doing so I have acted in accordance with your wishes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 254.

Major Cox to Mr. Marling.

(No. 5.)

Sir,

Bushire, January 5, 1908.

With reference to correspondence ending with my despatch No. 96, dated the 15th December, 1907, I have the honour to forward, for your information, copies of the communications which I have received from Captain D. L. R. Lorimer, His Majesty's Vice-Consul, Ahwaz, on the subject of the affairs of the Oil Syndicate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. Z. COX.

Inclosure 2 in No. 254.

Mr. G. Reynolds to Vice-Consul Lorimer.

Dear Sir,

Naseri, December 23, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I am in receipt of a wire from my principals, dated London, the 3rd current, which reached Bussorah on the 11th idem by post from Amara, and which I received by my post in camp. The message in question, when translated, runs as follows: "After due consideration we have come to the conclusion that (at this) premature juncture it is injudicious to deduct from instalment on account of robbery. Pay instalment of 500*l.* in full. Leave no excuse for Bakhtiari Chiefs to quarrel with us. Do your very utmost to secure quiet working for next few months. It is of the utmost importance to us. We trust this will meet with the views of Lorimer. Am writing fully." This probably had its origin in my letter of the 16th October, 1907, to Glasgow, where I report further thefts and remark that "I have no hesitation in saying that these thefts are solely due to the attitude adopted towards us by their Excellencies, and as the only way to make them feel that such is a mistake, this carelessness and utter neglect of our interests, with the concurrence of Captain Lorimer, I am deducting our claims for compensation from them this

15th November instalment, and note that roughly the amount to be deducted will be some 7,000 krans." This deduction was not made, as you know, and I arranged to pay the sum in full, and had paid it into the bank at Ispahan for transmission to the Khans by the 15th November, 1907. You, however, on the 17th November received such news from His Britannic Majesty's Legation in Tehran as rendered it expedient to stop the whole payment, which was done forthwith.

As remarked above, this message would seem to originate in the idea that only a portion of the instalment had been withheld, but, seeing that the entire instalment is not paid, it might be held that it were all the more incumbent, on the authority of this wire, to pay it now in full. I therefore communicate this to you, as I have gathered from you that the suspension of the entire instalment has the approval of the Legation. Under these circumstances I should be much obliged if you would kindly let me have your views in the matter, and if, in your opinion, I should consider myself at liberty to act on the instructions conveyed in the above-quoted wire and take immediate action in compliance therewith. Awaiting the favour of a reply at your very early convenience, yours faithfully,

(Signed) GEORGE B. REYNOLDS.

Inclosure 3 in No. 254.

Vice-Consul Lorimer to Mr. G. Reynolds.

Sir, Ahwaz, December 24, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, of the contents of which I have taken note. In reply to the question contained in the last paragraph, I beg to say that you are correct in surmising that the suspension of the entire November instalment was made with the approval of the Legation. Under these circumstances, and as the step was the logical reply to action on the part of the Khans and conformed to the general line of policy on which our affairs with the Khans have for a considerable period been conducted, I could not myself reverse that step without having discussed the matter with His Majesty's Legation.

I therefore cannot recommend that you should do so, more especially as it seems clear that when your principals telegraphed they were not aware of the fact of the suspension of the entire instalment, still less of the excellent effect which that action and the firm attitude taken up by the Legation have had on their tone, as is evident from the letter which I received from them a couple of days ago.

In my experience of them I have never known the Khans in such an admirable frame of mind. I intend now to offer them my friendly assistance in getting out of their committal towards the Legation, but without modifying in any respect our consistently maintained demand for ordinary justice, any weakening of which would dispel the apprehension which has produced the present satisfactory results. Our best course is, I am convinced, to pursue our present policy, revealing no active desire to conciliate, but observing a scrupulous suavity and graciousness and endeavouring to avoid introducing any unnecessary cause of irritation.

The question of compensation might be allowed to remain in abeyance, though this will only render the eventual recovery of these and future claims more difficult; and the natural opportunity of settling all such claims is when the payment of the deferred November instalment is eventually conceded.

I have, &c.
(Signed) D. L. LORIMER, Captain, I.A.

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No. 255.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 27.)

Sir, Tehran, February 14, 1908.

WHEN I saw M. de Hartwig on the 3rd instant, he told me that he had been surprised at receiving instructions from St. Petersburg to try to make arrangements for the transfer to the Russian Government of our rights over the Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line; he was not aware that any definite agreement had been made for this purpose, though he knew that the matter had been discussed. I said that I was

under the impression that there was an understanding, but I was not at the moment sure exactly how it stood.

Having looked up the papers in the meantime, I informed M. de Hartwig on the 7th instant of the substance of the *aide-mémoires* of the 23rd June and the 24th August last, exchanged between His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg and M. Isvolsky (Confidential print of the 2nd July, Section 2; and of the 3rd September, Section 23), which seemed to me to be scarcely definitive, but I was not aware that any other communication has passed on the subject between the two Governments, as the Russian Memorandum seemed to anticipate. I would, however, telegraph to you, Sir, to inquire whether any more formal and definite agreement had been made.

If it is desired to make it, the transfer of our rights should not be difficult. By the Agreement of the 14th June, 1906 (Mr. Grant Duff's despatch No. 169 of the 21st June, 1906, Confidential print, Persia, Part VII, p. 27), the Persian Government agreed to the Indo-European Telegraph Company coming to an arrangement with His Majesty's Government for taking over the line, and in the event of such acquisition by the Company, a special Convention as to the working of the wire is to be concluded between the Company and the Persian Government. M. de Hartwig appears to think that, as the Indo-European Telegraph Company is under Russian protection, his Government will be satisfied if the Indo-European Telegraph Department's rights are made over to the Company in accordance with this Agreement. The local Manager of the Company believes that there need be no difficulty on the financial side of the question, about which the Russian Government were anxious for exact information. He would propose that, instead of the Company taking over the existing wire, the special Convention, contemplated in the 1906 Agreement, should provide for the construction by the Company of a new telegraph line from Kazvin to Hamadan, and that the existing wire, thence to the frontier, should be passed over to the Company. Mr. Casey thinks that this partly new line, Tehran-Kazvin-Hamadan-Khanikin, can be worked without loss on the usual conditions as to the division of receipts. The new part would be relatively inexpensive to construct, as it would run along the Russian Kazvin-Hamadan road, and it will naturally also be of service to Russia in developing the traffic of the road and the trade towards Sultanabad and Hamadan. The Persian Government's telegraph system will also be improved by the new means of communication between Kazvin and Hamadan and intermediate places. Supposing Mr. Casey's anticipation as to the financial result of working this wire to be realized, it might, however, be worth while for Russia to give the Company a guarantee against loss, as this would strengthen her hold over the system in the event of Persia wishing to cede the line to another party.

These considerations, however, concern the Russian Government more than ourselves.

The question still remains whether the cession of our rights over the Khanikin line should precede, or be made simultaneously with, the renewal of our other Telegraph Concessions, viz., for the Tehran-Bushire, Jask-Gwadar, and Kashan-Robat lines. One advantage of the latter alternative would be that the Russian hold over the line would be secured for a long period of years.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

P.S.—With reference to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 25 of the 9th February, I may add that according to Colonel Mallock's report on the Indo-European Telegraph Department, printed in Calcutta in 1890, "the line from Tehran to Khanikin ceased to be used for international traffic on the 1st March, 1868, and its maintenance was given up on the 1st April of that year."

C. M. M.

[6681]

No. 256.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 28.)

Sir, Tehran, February 14, 1908.

IN my efforts to obtain the payment of the over-due interest on the 1903-4 loan, I have constantly made use of the weapon provided me by the instructions contained in your telegram No. 203 of the 19th December, and when on the 27th January

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Mushir-ed-Dowleh informed me that the moneys would be paid forthwith, I hoped that the desired result was attained. On the following day, however, M. Mornard, the Administrator of the Customs, informed me that no order for the payment to be effected had reached him, nor had he any reason to anticipate that such an order was likely to be issued for the moment. In these circumstances it appeared to me requisite that stronger pressure should be applied, and I, therefore, ventured to suggest by my telegram No. 34 of the 28th January, that I might be authorized to inform the Persian Government that, in view of the time which they had allowed to pass without replying to the conditions on which His Majesty's Government were prepared to agree to the suspension of the sinking fund, His Majesty's Government considered those conditions to have been tacitly accepted.

There is no doubt that the prospect that their liberty to raise a foreign loan might be still further circumscribed than at present has far greater weight with the Persian Government than any claim for money however strongly pressed, and I therefore hoped that a communication in the sense above indicated would serve to clinch the matter. There was also every prospect that, with the interminable delays consequent on the existing system of referring all public questions to committees of Assembly, no reply would have been given to my note, and the tacit acceptance of our conditions would have been acquired.

On the 6th instant the Minister for Foreign Affairs assured me that the moneys had actually been paid, but inquiry at the bank showed that His Excellency was mistaken.

The dismissal of M. Mornard from the post of Administrator of Customs left the custody of the revenues of that department in the hands of the Minister of Commerce, Kaim Makam, who is remarkable even in Persia for corruption and speculation; and the prospect of the moneys set aside for meeting the debt due to His Majesty's Government being paid seemed to be seriously jeopardised. I therefore, on the 8th instant, in speaking to Mushir-ed-Dowleh on the subject of M. Mornard's dismissal, insisted that his Excellency should write to Kaim Makam and warn him against touching these funds. His Excellency agreed to do so, but said that the order for payment was already issued. On the following day M. Mornard called on me and informed me that the order was prepared and required only the signature of the Minister of Finance; he believed I could count on seeing the payment made within twenty-four hours, and, Mr. Rabino, who happened to come in at the moment, thought that I could regard the question as settled. On the evening of the 11th, however, Mr. Rabino informed me that he had encashed nothing and, as I had not received your authority to make a communication in the sense of my telegram above mentioned, I addressed the note, of which a copy is inclosed, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mushir-ed-Dowleh, to whom I handed the note personally, again asserted that the money had actually been paid, and seemed much surprised when I assured him that such was not the case.

It is quite possible, as the Minister assured me, that the order for payment prepared, and only requires the signature of the Minister of Finance. The anxiety of his Excellency Nizam-es-Sultaneh for the life of his only son, who has been dangerously ill, and the interruption of business consequent on the religious observances of the "Katl" may have well prevented the accomplishment of the last formality; but on the other hand, it seems probable that the campaign of intrigue against M. Mornard has been an equally important factor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 256.

Mr. Marling to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Your Excellency,

[Undated.]

I HAVE the honour to remind your Excellency that in spite of the repeated assurances and promises which I have received from you, neither has the interest on the British loan of 1903-4 due on the 4th April, 1907, been paid, nor has any reply been given to the conditions formulated in Sir C. Spring Rice's note of the 31st August, 1907, which His Majesty's Government attached to their assent to the request of the Persian Government for the suspension for three years of the sinking fund on that loan.

In the circumstances, I have no option but to inform your Excellency, in

accordance with the instructions of my Government, that unless that interest is paid forthwith, and a formal acceptance of the conditions above alluded to, given to the Legation without delay, His Majesty's Government will demand the immediate payment of the full amount of the annuity instead of the interest only.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[6682]

No. 257.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 29.)
Sir,

Tehran, February 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Captain Haworth, His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah, relative to the present phases of the Turco-Persian frontier question in the region of Khanikin and Pusht-i-Kuh.

Captain Haworth, who, in accordance with the authorization contained in your telegram No. 15 of the 11th January, has since proceeded to Kasr-i-Shirin, telegraphs that caravans and pilgrims are now prohibited from crossing the frontier by an order from Tehran. I can, however, learn nothing of such a prohibition here. He also adds that he has heard that the Turks are making preparations against the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh (see penultimate paragraph of his despatch No. 2 of the 14th January), and adds that this seems to him highly probable. In this connection I would venture to refer to my telegrams Nos. 13 and 14 of the 10th and 13th January respectively, respecting collisions between the Turks and Persians near Merivan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 257.

Consul Haworth to Mr. Marling.

(No. 2.)
Sir,

Kermanshah, January 14, 1908.

WITH regard to the movements on the frontier, I have the honour to report that I received news that on the 7th January Yussuf Pasha arrived at Khanikin. On the same day eighty men of the tribe of Jaffer Murad are stated to have crossed the Persian frontier.

Zahir-ul-Mulk, Acting Governor of Kermanshah, received orders that he was to proceed to Kasr-i-Shirin, and to give definite news in order that measures might be taken if necessary. Samsam-el-Mamalek, Chief of the Sinjahi tribe and Governor of Kasr-i-Shirin, wrote to Wasook-el-Mamalek, Accountant-General of the troops at Kermanshah, saying that he had been offered £ T. 500 a-month, and his son £ T. 250 a-month if he would acknowledge Turkish sovereignty. It is claimed that the Sinjabis were originally a Turkish tribe of Kurds. The Sinjabis are Ali Allahis.

There is little doubt that part of the country now ruled by the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh was Turkish territory before the Turco-Russian war.

Kerim Beg, Turkish Consul-General at Kermanshah, left for Bagdad suddenly on the 8th. He had been talking of going for his health some time before; but had this been the reason for his departure he would presumably not have taken with him his Secretary, Khafil Effendi, with whom he is on bad terms.

Zahir-ul-Mulk left for Kasr-i-Shirin on the 11th, taking with him 250 men of the Zangineh regiment, of which he is Chief, and 63 men of the artillery. It is given out that he is going to collect revenue from the tribes on the frontier. The Persian Consul at Bagdad sent news to the Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh, to Daoud Khan, Chief of the Kalhors, and to Samsam-el-Mamalek before mentioned, saying that Turkish troops were being sent to the frontier, reinforcing those now there and warning them to be ready.

I fear that these three tribes do not understand the strength of the Turks, and the danger is that they, confident in their power to defeat the troops before them, may be only too ready to fight unless warned to the contrary.

Daoud Khan possesses considerable property at Mandali, and probably would be more cautious than the others.

I have, &c.
(Signed) L. HAWORTH, *Captain*.

[6683]

No. 258.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 30.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to report that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh, on his own authority, and against the wishes of the Assembly, has obtained the signature of the Shah to the German offer to enlarge very considerably the existing German school. I am informed that the Minister of Finance has also agreed to provide the annual subvention of 12,000 tomans which the German scheme contemplates.

It is said that both the Assembly and the Anjumans are very much displeased with the unconstitutional action of the President in this matter, and that they will force him and Nizam-es-Sultaneh to withdraw the acceptance. It appears that the proviso of the German offer that instruction in the German language shall be obligatory has caused considerable annoyance.

I would venture to invite your attention to the very undesirable results which would flow from the creation in Tehran of a great educational establishment in German hands. The staff of the existing school has already been considerably increased, and there are now nine or ten professors attached to it. The enlargement of the school to provide accommodation for, it is said, 700 scholars would mean a concomitant increase in the teaching staff, and the mere presence of some thirty or forty Germans in the European colony of the capital would add greatly to the importance and prestige of the German Legation. In the enlarged teaching staff, moreover, there would certainly be included a certain number—perhaps five or six—of scientific professors, who would be eligible, on the lines on which the composition of the Sanitary Council is now governed, for seats on that Board, and the German Legation might be represented by six or seven members as against three British, one Russian, and four or five French. Such a disproportion would be quite inadmissible, and the composition of the foreign element of the Council might have to be reformed on a one-Power-one-vote basis.

The French Minister is much impressed with the importance of nipping this German school project in the bud; and he thinks this might be achieved by inducing the Persian Government to found a national university or *lycée*, with a large proportion of European teachers on the staff, and a European element also on the Board of Management. His Excellency is making a Report to his Government in this sense.

I am rather sceptical as to the possibility of inducing the Persian Government to fall in with such a project, except under very strong pressure; but there can be no question as to the value to Germany of a large educational establishment, such as is projected, for the purpose of diffusing German ideas and influence.

There is a persistent rumour that Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh is scheming to obtain the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs. M. de Hartwig is seriously disquieted at the possibility of the direction of Persian external relations falling into the hands of a man so completely under German influences, and will take every means he can to prevent such a misfortune. I propose to assist him unobtrusively by pressing for Ehtesham's departure for London.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[6684]

No. 259.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 31.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a further note which I have received from the Persian Government respecting the Turco-Persian frontier, and which reached this Legation just too late to be sent by the last messenger.

With reference to my despatch No. 9, transmitting copy of a Report addressed

to the British Acting Consul-General at Tabriz by his agent at Soujboulak, I have the honour to report that Mr. Wratislaw has informed me that he thinks the facts respecting recent events there are as stated therein.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 259.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh to Mr. Marling.

(Translation.)

Tehran, January 30, 1908.

MOHAMMED FAZL PASHA FERIK, accompanied by Turkish troops, has encroached on and resided for some time past at Pasva, which is absolutely Persian territory. To carry out his designs he has been inciting the unruly Persian tribes to plunder and murder in the neighbourhood of Miandoab and Soujboulak. Property of Persian subjects to the amount of over 500,000 tomans has been carried off, and very considerable damage has been done to the revenue of the Government and income of Persian subjects.

Owing to the applications made to him by the distressed inhabitants, the Firman Firma proceeded to Soujboulak, but this being against the wish of Mohammed Fazl Pasha, he (the Pasha) began, on the one hand, to incite the Persian tribes to murder and plunder in the district of Miandoab, cut off all communications between that place and Soujboulak, preventing the transport of provisions; and, on the other hand, he wrote in his letters to the Firman Firma threatening him and proposing to his Highness not to proceed to Soujboulak. In order to restore peace in the district and to pacify the inhabitants of Soujboulak, his Highness was obliged to proceed to the place; but on his arrival there the Pasha renewed his representations, and began to suggest in his letters and messages that his Highness should leave the place. The Firman Firma's representations to Ferik for the maintenance of peace, removal of the mischief, and the restraint of the Turkish tribes, who were mixed up with the rebellious Persian clans, was of no avail. On the contrary, Ferik acted with precipitation in encouraging trouble and rebellion, and accompanied by 20,000 tribesmen belonging to Mamesk, Mankur, and Piran, 4,000 Karapapak, foot and horse, armed with Persian Government rifles, tribes residing in Turkish territory, some regular troops with ammunition, and six guns, came at first to Kusehkahriz and Agridash, and then Kahrizeh, less than a mile from Soujboulak. Guns have been placed on the hills surrounding the town.

When Ferik was at Kusehkahriz the Firman Firma wrote to him through Khoda Yar Khan, a Cossack officer, and Mirza Mustafa Khan, saying that his coming to Kusehkahriz with troops, guns, and ammunition is not only contrary to the Treaty stipulations existing between the two States and the law of nations, but is also contrary to his own letter, in which he distinctly said that he would not move a step forward. The Firman Firma also asked him as to the object of his coming with troops to Kusehkahriz. Ferik had told the Firman Firma's messengers that he could not wait more than twenty-four hours, and that Soujboulak must be evacuated, otherwise he would have the town bombarded and stormed, and that he would be answerable to the Government.

In reply to the Firman Firma's letter Ferik wrote to him yesterday, threatening him, and proposing to him that he should withdraw to Miandoab, lest his Highness' presence should lead to some untoward incidents. The Prince, who had no authority to resist, returned to Miandoab.

Ferik is now engaged in disturbing the peace in the interior of Persia and stirring up mischief among the tribes.

Since such proceedings on the part of Ferik are contrary to the Treaty rights of the two Governments and opposed to the law of nations, especially when the Frontier Commissioners are meeting at Urmia, I have to enumerate the facts and to protest strongly against the aggression and misdeeds of Ferik, and to request you to be good enough to lay before your Government the unsatisfactory conduct of the Turkish officials towards the distinct rights of the Persian Government.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) MUSHIR-ED-DOWLEH.

[6730]

No. 260.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 26.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosure in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 23rd January, relative to relations between His Majesty's Government and the Sheikh of Mohammerah.

India Office, February 25, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 260.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Bushire, January 12, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to refer to correspondence ending with my telegram dated the 23rd December, 1907, regarding the possibility of clause 9 of the Bunder Shwaikh lease being construed into the grant to Sheikh Mubarek bin Subah of a dynastic guarantee.

2. On the 7th instant, accompanied by Mr. McDouall, I had a long interview with the Sheikh of Mohammerah, at the latter's urgent request, on the subject of his affairs and future. A separate report will be submitted in regard to what passed generally; meanwhile it seems advisable to communicate the following to Government without delay.

While explaining his ever-present apprehensions as to the fate that may be in store for him at the hands of a strongly established Medjliss or, alternatively, in event of the collapse of the Medjliss and an upheaval in Persia, the Sheikh expressed his anxious hope that the British Government would feel able to give him, in return for some suitable Agreement from himself, an undertaking to maintain him and his children in the enjoyment of the rights and status at present possessed by him as Sheikh of Mohammerah and the Arab tribes pertaining thereto.

As it appeared *prima facie* to Mr. McDouall and myself that the terminology employed by the speaker could only be interpreted as a request for a dynastic guarantee, we were at pains to probe his meaning. We asked him did he suggest that the British Government should guarantee the continued existence of an Arab Sheikh of Mohammerah on the present lines; or, that they should guarantee the maintenance of him personally and his own family heirs in the enjoyment of their present position.

He answered, without hesitation, that the latter was his intended meaning, adding in explanation that his own paramountcy was unquestioned; that his son Sheikh Chasib was universally regarded by his dependents as his natural successor, and that in case of Sheikh Chasib's demise he had other sons and blood relations who could succeed.

No reference was of course made by him or me to our recent Agreement with Sheikh Mubarek, but, as the Government of India are aware, the two Sheikhs are fast friends, and it may be taken for granted that Sheikh Mubarek had informed his comrade of his own Agreement with us, and that the latter had it in mind when he expressed himself as above.

For this reason I report the incident as indirectly bearing upon the issue raised in the correspondence alluded to in the first paragraph of this communication.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. Z. COX.

[6757]

No. 261.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 56.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

AFFAIRS of Oil Syndicate.

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

I understand, with reference to your telegram No. 38 of the 24th instant, that the Syndicate agreed to the payment of the extra 500*l.* per annum to the Khans, who

considered 2,000*l.* insufficient for the provision of guards, for the express purpose of their paying for adequate guards; 2,000*l.* would therefore still remain for the Khans if the Syndicate now retained 500*l.* for the payment of the guards by themselves.

May I authorize Lorimer to use, if he thinks desirable, the argument that extra Consular guards will be maintained until a satisfactory arrangement for native guards is reached? The Khans may be induced to consent to payment by Syndicate if they are given to understand this.

[6745]

No. 262.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 57.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

BELGIAN Customs officials.

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

I venture to ask for information on this subject. M. de Hartwig yesterday called and read me his instructions, saying I should receive similar ones.

I have not received the telegrams to which Sir A. Nicolson refers in his telegram No. 32 of the 21st instant.

[6761]

No. 263.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 58.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

I learn from Minister for Foreign Affairs that Soujboulak (see my telegram No. 55 of the 25th instant) is still held by Kurdish tribes and by a Turkish force under Izzet Pasha, although Mohammed Faze Pasha has left the place.

[6756]

No. 264.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 26.)

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

*St. Petersburg, February 26, 1908.*TURKISH aggressions. Circular telegram of Persian Government *re.*

[Foreign Office despatch No. 33 of the 12th instant.]

I am informed by M. Isvolsky that the Russian Government would have no objection to concerting with His Majesty's Government, should the latter be inclined to take notice of the fact that the protest of the Persian Government was addressed to all the Powers and not only to Russia and England, who have always acted as mediating Powers in all differences between Turkey and Persia.

Should any such step be taken, the best mode of procedure, in his opinion, would be for Mr. Marling and M. de Hartwig to address an identic note to the Persian Government. The special position of the two Powers, in regard to the Turco-Persian question, might thus, he thinks, with advantage be brought home to the Persian Government.

He suggests that the two Representatives might concert as to the terms of the communication.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[6233]

No. 265.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 26, 1908.

PLEASE refer to your telegram No. 43 of the 10th instant, respecting Shiraz escort.

Unless there is some improvement in the situation, the guard will be maintained at increased strength for the whole six months' period which the arrangement with Treasury covers. It is unnecessary at present to come to any decision as to retention for a longer period.

[5952]

No. 266.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 41.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 26, 1908.

TELEGRAPH lines exchange. Please refer to your telegram No. 41 of the 8th instant.

The Indian Telegraph Department will accept Russian obligations; but for the sake of unity of administration, and also for reasons of policy, it may later on be advisable to transfer this line to the Indo-European.

[5952]

No. 267.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 42.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 26, 1908.

TEHRAN-KHANIKIN telegraph line. Please refer to your telegram No. 42 of the 8th instant.

For purposes of recording Agreement between British and Russian Governments, we contemplate no formality beyond exchange of Memoranda, which we consider sufficient.

[6745]

No. 268.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 45.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 26, 1908.

CUSTOMS officials.

I have received your telegram No. 57 of to-day.

Please refer to my telegrams of the 20th February to St. Petersburg (Nos. 51 and 55) repeated to you.

Representations to the Persian Government. You may now confer with your Russian colleague as to whether such a course is advisable.

[5952]

No. 269.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 59.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 26, 1908.

PERSIA.

Exchange of telegraph lines.

A Memorandum on this subject is being sent you by bag.

We would prefer to deal first with the Khaf-Seistan and Tehran-Meshed lines exchange, as there may possibly be some difficulty about the prolongation of our Concessions, which question will have to be raised at the same time as that of the Tehran-Khanikin line.

If the transactions in regard to the different lines are not simultaneous, we must be prepared for some criticism here. As regards the Tehran-Khanikin line, however, the Russians are, of course, not bound in any way to postpone action. There is no need to insist on this point, but you should, if necessary, explain it to the Government to which you are accredited.

It would, moreover, be to the Russians' advantage if our rights over the Khanikin Concession were transferred at the same time as, or subsequently to, the prolongation of the Concession, for their control would, in this case, instead of terminating in 1925, be extended to 1945.

[6888]

No. 270.

Mr. Rubino to Imperial Bank of Persia.—(Communicated by Sir L. Griffin, February 27, 1908.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, February 8, 1908.

PERSIAN Government indebtedness.

By an indiscretion, we have learnt that the Government owe the following amounts to the Russian Bank:—

	At 9 per cent.	Krans.
" 12 "	12,000,000
" 10 "	5,000,000
" 12 "	1,500,000
" 12 "	1,500,000
Total	20,000,000

to which has to be added a considerable amount of interest.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. RABINO,

Chief Manager.

Inclosure in No. 270.

Memorandum of Indebtedness of the Persian Government to the Imperial Bank of Persia, January 28, 1908.

	Krans.	Krans.	Krans.	
Government general accounts ..	..	17,428,285.70		
Estimated interest to December 31, 1907 ..	..	192,438.75		
			17,620,724.45	
Nasser-es-Sultaneh promissory notes ..	..	2,061,593.60		
Interest from September 20, 1907, to December 31, 1907 ..	..	70,094.15		
			2,131,687.75	
Acceptances of Customs account salary. 3rd instalment of Naib-es-Sultaneh ..	..	63,175.50		
Interest from December 21, 1907, to December 31, 1907 ..	..	210.60		
			63,386.10	
Promissory notes of His Imperial Majesty the Shah account, Haji Bagher ..	..	800,000.00		
Interest from November 11, 1907, to December 31, 1907 ..	..	11,733.35		
			811,733.35	
Debts of His Imperial Majesty the Shah whilst Valiahd in Tabreez—				
Current account to September 20, 1907 ..	459,507.60			
Interest to December 31, 1907 ..	15,623.25			
		475,130.85		
Guarantee ..	277,156.80			
Interest from August 2, 1906, to December 31, 1907 ..	50,635.90			
		327,791.70*		
			802,922.95	

21,430,454.60
krans, at
exchange of
50 to the £
= 428,609½.

* Sic

Liabilities for Third Parties.

	Krans.	Krans.	Krans.	
Mushir-ed-Dowleh .. .. .	..	650,000·00		
Interest from September 20, 1907, to December 31, 1907 .. .. .	..	22,100·00	672,100·00	
Shoa-es-Sultaneh	900,000·00			
Interest from August 3, 1906, to December 31, 1907	194,417·85	1,094,417·85		
Shoa-es-Sultaneh	500,000·00			
Interest from October 12, 1905, to December 31, 1907	148,390·30	648,390·30		4,404,516·10 krans, at exchange of 50 to the £ = 88,090.
Shoa-es-Sultaneh	600,000·00			
Interest from August 24, 1906, to December 31, 1907	117,529·15	717,529·15	2,460,337·30	
Amir Bahadur Jang .. .. .	..	1,025,000·00		
Interest from May 22, 1906, to December 31, 1907 .. .. .	..	247,078·80	1,272,078·80	
			25,834,970·70	
			£ s. d.	
			516,699 10 0	
25,834,970·70 krans, at exchange of 50 to the £ =				
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
Annuity due April 4, 1907, on loan of 290,000l. (of which 13,601l. 0s. 9d. is for interest)	13,601 0 9*			
Amount of principal	9,669 6 3	23,270 7 0		
Interest from April 4, 1907, to December 31, 1907 .. .. .	..	863 17 2	24,134 4 2	
Total .. .. .	..	..	540,853 14 2	

* Note.—On the 18th February, 1908, the London office was instructed by telegram from Tehran to hold at the disposal of the India Office its share of this interest.

POSITION in Cash and Bullion at the Imperial Bank of Persia, Tehran, advised by telegram on the 18th February, 1908.

Assets.		Liabilities.	
	Tomans.		Tomans.
Coin in Treasury	770,000	Notes in circulation	1,450,000
Persian and foreign gold coins on hand	40,000	Current accounts	445,000
Bar silver in the Mint	120,000		
Caravans of silver krans due in seven days	110,000		
Bar silver on hand and in transit from London	300,000		
Bushire caravan of silver krans en route	100,000		
Total	1,440,000	Total	1,895,000

[6783]

No. 271.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 27.)

Sir, India Office, February 25, 1908.
IN continuation of my letter of the 19th instant as to the exchange of the Meshed-Tehran and Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph lines, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to state that it appears, from the inclosed copy of a letter from Major Sykes, that the proposal made in paragraph 5 (b) of the letter of the Government of India dated the 16th ultimo was made in ignorance of the fact that a British signaller is at present stationed at Turbat.

A Minute on the subject by the Director-in-Chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department is inclosed.

It seems clear that if the retention of a British signaller at Turbat is claimed, it will be difficult to ask the Russian Government to remove Russian signallers from intermediate stations on the Khaf-Nasratabad line.

The attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the matter in a telegram, of which a copy is inclosed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 271.

Major Sykes to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Sir, Meshed, December 17, 1907.
WITH reference to the proposed exchange of the entire Tehran-Meshed line and the northern section of the Meshed-Seistan line for the southern section of the Seistan line, I have the honour to suggest that it should be clearly laid down that we have the right to retain telegraph clerks on the present scale—namely, two at Meshed, one at Turbat, and, presumably, one at Tehran. The scale of the staff at Khaf and southwards would, I suppose, be settled by ourselves.

2. Unless this staff be definitely agreed to and through connection with Tehran and Seistan guaranteed, it seems possible that the Russians will make an attempt to entirely oust our employes from the Meshed telegraph office. In this connection the Russians have their own clerks on the Meshed-Tehran line.

3. The question as to whether two clerks will be ultimately needed for Meshed is one of detail, whereas in my humble opinion it is of considerable importance to secure the recognition of the principle before the exchange is made.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. M. SYKES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 271.

Memorandum by Mr. Kirk.

THE Secret letter dated the 16th ultimo from the Government of India, a copy of which was sent to the Foreign Office on the 19th instant, explains the views of the Government of India on the subject of the transfer of the Meshed-Seistan and Meshed-Tehran lines. It appears from Major Sykes' letter that there is a British signaller at Turbat, a station between Meshed and Khaf, and that he considers this man should be retained there. The Government of India letter does not make any mention of the British signaller at Turbat, but it expressly shows how very desirable it is that all Russian signallers should be removed from the intermediate offices on the Khaf-Seistan line. If the Russian Government agree to the removal of their men from the intermediate offices of the Khaf-Seistan section, they would undoubtedly claim that the British signaller should be removed from the intermediate office at Turbat on the Khaf-Meshed line. It might perhaps be advisable to telegraph to the Government of India, pointing out the position, and ask for their views on the subject.

Indo-European Telegraph Department,
India Office, February 21, 1908.

Inclosure 3 in No. 271.

*Mr. Morley to Government of India.**India Office, February 25, 1901.*(Telegraphic.) P.
PERSIAN telegraphs.

See paragraph 5 (b) of your letter of the 16th ultimo. It is inconsistent with your proposal for withdrawal of Russian signallers from intermediate stations on Khaf-Seistan line that British signaller, now apparently stationed at Turbat, should be retained. See letter of the 17th December from Major Sykes.

[6851]

No. 272.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 27.)(No. 59.)
(Telegraphic.) P.*Tehran, February 27, 1908.*

AFFAIRS of Oil Syndicate.

Payment of guards by Syndicate.

Lorimer thinks moment inopportune for pressing Khans to agree to this (see my telegram No. 56 of the 26th instant). Pending settlement of matters now under consideration, this question will therefore not be raised.

I have left to Lorimer's discretion the question of the payment of the November instalment.

Lorimer most strongly deprecates removal of Indian guard before next six months, within which prospects of oil will probably be settled. I entirely concur in this view.

[6756]

No. 273.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 62.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 27, 1908.

TURKISH aggressions in Persia: I have received your telegram No. 33 of yesterday.

I think it will be well not to provoke any questions as to the Persian circular telegram, and to content ourselves with the thanks expressed to us by the Persian Government, as I fear they must know that German intervention has, at any rate, been not less effective than ours.

No settlement of the frontier question has yet been arrived at, and even the Soujboulak incident is not quite satisfactorily closed; and if we do not mean to take strong action on Persia's behalf when the next incident arises, to tell her to rely solely on our intervention would place us in a weak position.

While, however, I do not consider the present moment very favourable for Mr. Marling and M. de Hartwig to take the steps suggested by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, I entirely agree that some action might be desirable if the Persian Government give further occasion for it in the future.

[6941]

No. 274

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 28.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 26th instant, relative to the use of the German flag on native vessels in the Persian Gulf.

India Office, February 28, 1908.

[6945]

275*.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 60.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 28, 1908.

BOMB was thrown at Shah this afternoon at 3.15 p.m. His Majesty escaped unhurt. Several persons were killed. King informed.

[3984]

No. 159*.

Sir Edward Grey to Consul-General Cumberbatch.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, February 5, 1908.

A REPORT reaches us that steam-ship "Bigimaleen" disembarked a very large quantity of arms and ammunition between the 22nd and 28th December at Beyrout, and that Turkish officers and men were sent on with them by train to Aleppo. You should telegraph any information you possess, especially as regards quantity disembarked and ultimate destination.

Inclosure in No. 274.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P.

February 26, 1908.

REPORT from Resident in Persian Gulf states that German flag is being flown by three native vessels with headquarters at Lingah. Owner, who is now residing at Lingah, is a native of Kangun, on Persian coast. Two of his boats are mortgaged for 6,000 rupees to Wönekhaus and Co., by whom he had been financed, and on whose behalf he is engaged in mother-of-pearl trade. There are informal certificates in his possession, stating that "he is allowed to sail under German flag, as he belongs to our German firm," signed by Brown on behalf of Wönekhaus. Copy of informal certificate, as well as of mortgage document, has been secured by Resident. Articles 30 to 41 of General Act of Brussels appear to be contravened by use of flag in the circumstances reported. Though he has no reason to suppose that any native craft in these waters are flying unauthorized British flags, Resident suggests that it would be advisable that he should first endeavour to ascertain that there are no such cases, if communication to German Government with reference to General Act is contemplated. He has been instructed to report as soon as possible result of inquiries which he is to make with regard to this point.

[6940]

No. 275.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 49.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, February 28, 1908.

I HAVE received the following telegram from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urmia, dated the 27th February, No. 19:—

"I have been informed by Tahir Pasha that as the relations between the two Commissions are not at all satisfactory he proposes to leave Urmia on the 29th February."

I communicated this report to Tewfik Pasha, but his Excellency denies its accuracy, and the Persian Ambassador here has no information on the matter, although he is in direct telegraphic communication with the Persian Commissioner. Yesterday his Highness received assurances from the Porte as to Izzet Pasha evacuating Soujboulak, which seem to him satisfactory.

[5689]

No. 276.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 54.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 28, 1908.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris,* forwarding the text of the instructions issued by the French Government to M. Bizot, the newly-appointed Financial Adviser to the Persian Government.

I have to request your Excellency to ascertain from the Russian Government whether, in their opinion, these instructions are calculated to secure the objects in view, and to inform them at the same time that His Majesty's Government, for their part, are completely satisfied with the terms of the document.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[5421]

No. 277.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 28, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,† forwarding copy of a

* No. 218.

† No. 201.

Report from His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire relative to the circumstances in which three native boats, with head-quarters at Lingah, are now plying under the German flag.

It will be perceived from paragraph 4 of Major Cox' despatch that he has instructed the Residency Agent at Lingah to endeavour to obtain copies of the certificates granted and other information likely to indicate whether or not the grant of the flags is compatible with the provisions of the Brussels Act, and that he will report further on the subject in due course.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey proposes to await this further Report before considering the steps to be taken in this matter, since the attitude of His Majesty's Government must necessarily depend on the legality of the action of the German Consul at Bushire. Should it appear that the Consul was justified in granting to these craft the use of the German flag, it will be superfluous to apply to the International Bureau at Brussels for copies of the certificates as proposed by Major Cox.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey would be glad to be informed whether Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in this view.

I am to add that the reference to the Brussels Act in the penultimate paragraph of Major Cox' Report should apparently be paragraph 3 of Article XLI, and not to paragraph 3 of Article XIII.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[7015] No. 278.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 29.)

(No. 62.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, February 29, 1908.*

SUJBULAK and Turco-Persian frontier.
With reference to Sir N. O'Connor's telegram No. 49 of the 28th instant, I am informed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that only a few troops remain at Sujbulak awaiting transport to retire.
Izzet Pasha has left.

[7033] No. 279.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 29.)

(No. 63.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, February 29, 1908.*

BOMB outrage.
One or two political Societies were known to be making preparations in anticipation of an alleged further attempt by the Shah at a *coup d'État*; but, as His Majesty has of late abstained, to all appearances, from anti-constitutional action, the outrage reported in my telegram No. 60 of the 28th instant was unexpected.

The bombs are believed to be of foreign make.

The town remains quiet.

I much doubt the truth of the explanation that the Shah was going to Doshan Tepeh so as to be out of danger during an attempt to be made by his retainers and guards, of which, it is alleged, he was organizing another force, as in December. The attempt was more probably the work of a small section of Extremists, who took advantage of the first opportunity that occurred.

[7088] No. 280.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received February 29.)

(No. 36.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburg, February 29, 1908.*

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs wrote to me this morning saying that a telegram had arrived from Russian Minister at Tehran to effect that news confirming evacuation of Saijboulak had been received by the Persian Government, and that at Tehran action of Russia and England was held exclusively responsible for this result. In the opinion

of the Russian Minister it would be an opportune time for him and Mr. Marling to point out to the Persian Government the special part which England and Russia have always taken in Turco-Persian differences, and he considers that this could best be effected by means of an identic note, which should form a reply to the Circular telegram of the Persian Government. Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs would in this way, thinks the Russian Minister, be given an opportunity of explaining to Persian Parliament the value to be attached to the intervention at Constantinople of Russia and England.

I should be glad to know, for information of Minister of Foreign Affairs, whether you are inclined to accept this view, and, if so, whether you will send the necessary instructions to His Majesty's Representative at Tehran.

In meanwhile, and until again hearing from you, I will refrain from acting on instructions contained in your telegram No. 62 of the 27th February.

[7084] No. 281.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 1.)

(No. 50.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 1, 1908.*
I HAVE received the following telegram No. 20, dated the 29th February, from His Majesty's Consul-General at Urmia:—

“With reference to my telegram No. 19 of the 27th February, this morning the Turkish Commission left Urmia, Serai, which is situated in Turkish territory, being their immediate destination.

“(The following is Confidential.)

“I was told confidentially by a member of the Turkish Commission that Tahir Pasha, in addition to his ostensible instructions, which were of a conciliatory nature, had secret ones evidently of an entirely different character. Tahir Pasha refused to show these secret instructions to his colleagues.”

[7085] No. 282.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 1.)

(No. 51.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 1, 1908.*

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

With reference to my telegram No. 50 of to-day's date, I have to inform you that another telegram was dispatched by the Grand Vizier on Friday night to Tahir Pasha to remain and, in accordance with previous instructions received by him from the Porte, to endeavour to arrive at a solution with his Persian colleague.

On learning that the Turkish Commissioner had actually departed, the Grand Vizier declared this morning that this was contrary to the course his Highness and the Porte had advocated, of precluding the possibility of complications by finding a line within the contested zone, and that he could only attribute the Turkish Commissioner's departure to instructions secretly issued from a high quarter.

[7122] No. 283.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 86.)
Sir, *St. Petersburg, February 18, 1908.*

IN accordance with the instructions conveyed to me in your despatch No. 33 of the 12th instant, I spoke to M. Isvolsky yesterday in regard to the military preparations which were being made by Turkey and which would give the impression that the Ottoman Government had in contemplation wider and more serious operations than had yet been undertaken. I said that my Government viewed the matter as one of considerable gravity, and that, as the situation was daily becoming more threatening, they would be glad to hear whether the Russian Government had any steps to suggest, so that, if possible, they might support them.

M. Isvolsky replied that he quite agreed that the preparations which Turkey was making caused well-grounded uneasiness, and they had seriously preoccupied both himself and the military authorities. As he had informed me on more than one occasion previously, the Russian Government had taken no measures in response to the action of Turkey, as the latter had not yet developed into a hostile demonstration. Russia was anxious to take no step in any part of the world which could possibly be interpreted as being of a provocative character, though naturally she could not allow her interests to be exposed to any danger. So long as was possible she wished to remain quite quiescent. He was in some doubt as to what steps could be taken at the present moment, and the situation in Europe and the attitude necessary to adopt towards Turkey required great caution. He was much obliged to His Majesty's Government for the observations which I had been requested to convey, and he would give the matter his most earnest consideration, and he would let me have a reply later.

I should add that his Excellency inquired whether I had any suggestion to make. I replied that I had no instructions on the point, and indeed we waited for some proposal from him; but perhaps a request to the Sublime Porte for information as to what all these preparations meant would do no harm.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[7123]

No. 284.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 87.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 18, 1908.

I SPOKE to M. Isvolsky yesterday in the sense of your despatch No. 31 of the 12th instant, regarding the protection which might be furnished to the Shah in the event of his taking refuge in a foreign Legation; and I left with his Excellency a short Memorandum stating that perhaps the question might be left to the discretion of the Representatives of Great Britain and Russia at Tehran, adding that he might be disposed to send instructions to M. de Hartwig not to propose guards unless he were sure that the offer would be accepted, and that he was satisfied that the measure was necessary for the personal safety of His Majesty.

M. Isvolsky said that it appeared to him that the procedure which I had mentioned seemed reasonable, and he would let me have a reply to my Memorandum when he had examined the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[7124]

No. 285.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 90.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 20, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY informed me yesterday that the Turkish Ambassador had spontaneously made to him a communication from the Ottoman Government in regard to the military preparations which Turkey was making on the Russian and Persian frontiers. Husny Pasha had been commissioned to state that the preparations, the extent of which had been exaggerated, were in no wise directed against the Russian frontier, nor were they conceived in any unfriendly spirit towards Russia. They had been initiated solely with the view of possible troubles occurring on the Persian frontier owing to the assembly and activity of "many thousand Persian brigands." Husny Pasha was directed to assure the Russian Government of the thoroughly friendly feelings with which the Turkish Government were animated towards the Cabinet of St. Petersburg and of their earnest desire to preserve the most amicable neighbourly relations.

M. Isvolsky had replied to Husny Pasha by informing him that he took act of the assurances and explanations which he had been instructed to deliver. At the same time he did not wish to disguise from his Excellency that the preparations which the Ottoman Government had undertaken had attracted the serious attention of the Russian Government, and he might also tell him that they had not either escaped the notice of His Majesty's Government, owing to the fact that they had not been confined to the neighbourhood of the Persian frontier, but had also occurred in the districts adjoining

that of Russia and elsewhere. He was glad, therefore, to receive the assurances of the Ottoman Government of their friendly and peaceable sentiments. He had also told Husny Pasha that Russia had remained perfectly quiescent and had neither mobilized nor made any concentration of troops, beyond a slight redistribution of her forces on the Persian frontier in view of the unsettled situation in Tabreez and the neighbourhood.

M. Isvolsky remarked to me that he had telegraphed to M. Zinoview to report the observations of the Turkish Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, and to add that the Russian Government had taken act of the assurances which had been given. His Excellency thought that perhaps you might feel disposed also to say a word at Constantinople, and in order to afford you an opportunity of doing so, should you think fit, he had referred in his reply to Husny Pasha to the fact that the attention of His Majesty's Government had also been attracted by the military activity which had been displayed. M. Isvolsky added that he thought that he would publish the substance of his conversation with Husny Pasha, as the press had been occupying itself with the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[7126]

No. 286.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 93.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 21, 1908.

I GAVE M. Isvolsky a summary of the instructions with which you had furnished Sir N. O'Connor in respect to taking note of the assurances given by the Ottoman Government as to the object of their military preparations, and also expressing the grave concern of His Majesty's Government as to the future on account of the action taken by the Ottoman troops in Persian territory.

His Excellency replied that he would communicate the above instructions to M. Zinoview so that he might concert with his British colleague. He inquired whether I placed confidence in the sincerity of the assurances given by the Sublime Porte. I told him that I had no great confidence in any assurances given by the Turkish Government, but that I did not believe that their preparations were directed against Russia, but were probably made for the purpose of preparing some stroke in Persia, or possibly for warding off any coercive measures which they might imagine were in contemplation on account of the Macedonian or Persian frontier questions.

I may add that wild rumours have been prevalent here during the last two days as to the imminence of war between Russia and Turkey, and these rumours had a most depressing effect on the Stock Exchange. The official communiqué issued this morning will doubtless allay this unnecessary alarm.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[7127]

No. 287.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 94.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, February 21, 1908.

I COMMUNICATED to M. Isvolsky to-day the substance of the telegrams which had been received from Mr. Marling in respect to the project for dismissing the Belgian officials in Persia, and for replacing them by Germans, and I also gave him a summary of the instructions which you proposed to send to Mr. Marling in regard to the representations to be made to the Persian Government on the subject. I added that as the Persian Government denied having approached the German Legation on the subject, you were of opinion that it would be better to leave to the discretion of the two Representatives the question whether the representation should be delivered.

His Excellency said that he had understood from a telegram which he had received from M. de Hartwig that the two Representatives had already made certain remonstrances. I replied that this might be case, but that if representations were to be made they could be delivered with greater force if they emanated from the two Governments. M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling would be able to judge whether or not it would be necessary to give a formal warning to the Persian Government, and there would be no

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harm if they were both supplied with the instructions, so that they might act upon them in case of need. His Excellency agreed, and said that he would telegraph to M. de Hartwig instructions similar to those which you had proposed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

P.S.—I beg leave to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky, in which he informs me that he has telegraphed the necessary instructions to M. de Hartwig.

A. N.

Inclosure in No. 287.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur, Le 11 (24) Février, 1908.
JE m'empresse de vous faire savoir que, partageant entièrement l'avis de Sir E. Grey par rapport aux représentations que MM. Hartwig et Marling pourraient faire éventuellement au Gouvernement Persan au sujet des employés Allemands auxquels on projette de confier l'administration des douanes Persanes, j'ai expédié par télégraphe à notre Ministre à Téhéran des instructions l'invitant à s'entendre avec son collègue d'Angleterre et de faire ensuite auprès du Gouvernement du Schah, si les deux Représentants le trouvent nécessaire et opportun, des démarches dans le sens de celles qui avaient été proposées par Mr. Marling.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,
(Signé) ISVOLSKY.

[7133]

No. 288.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 101.)

Sir, St. Petersburg, February 26, 1908.
WITH reference to your despatch No. 33 of the 12th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky, expressing his readiness to join in representations to the Persian Government in respect to the action taken by the latter in addressing a protest to all the Powers in connection with Turkish aggression in Persian territory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 288.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur, Saint-Petersbourg, le 12 (25) Février, 1908.
ME référant à votre lettre du 5 (18) courant, je m'empresse de vous faire savoir que si le Cabinet de Londres est enclin à relever le fait que la protestation Persane contre les agissements Turcs est adressée à toutes les Puissances et non pas seulement à l'Angleterre et la Russie, qui de tout temps ont joué un rôle médiateur dans les différends Turco-Persans, le Gouvernement Impérial ne trouverait pas d'objections à s'associer à une démarche à faire dans ce sens.

Dans ce cas, la démarche en question pourrait consister en une note identique à adresser par M. Hartwig et Mr. Marling au Gouvernement du Schah, note dont la rédaction devrait être fixée, semble-t-il, d'un commun accord entre les deux Représentants.

Il me semble qu'une pareille mode d'agir aurait l'avantage de faire ressortir aux yeux des Persans la position toute particulière qu'occupent les deux Puissances par rapport à la question Turco-Persane.

Votre, &c.
(Signé) ISVOLSKY.

[7165]

No. 289.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 85.)

Sir,

Pera, February 22, 1908.
I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from the Persian Ambassador inclosing a note addressed to the Persian Embassy by the Sublime Porte on the 18th July, 1876, in which, his Highness observes, it is clearly stated that Mergavar "forms an integral part of Persian territory," and "that that province is two hours distant from the frontier on the Persian side."

The statement is not without interest in view of the frontier negotiations now proceeding.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 289.

Prince M. Riza Khan to Sir N. O'Connor.

M. l'Ambassadeur et cher Collègue, Constantinople, le 19 Février, 1908.
J'AI l'honneur d'envoyer ci-inclus à votre Excellence la copie d'une note de la Sublime Porte adressée à cette Ambassade en date du 29 Schaban, 1293 (s.a.), et 6 Juillet, 1292 (s.g.), par laquelle la Sublime Porte déclare clairement que Mergavar fait partie intégrante du territoire Persan et que la dite province se trouve à deux heures de distance intérieurement de la frontière.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) Prince M. RIZA KHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 289.

Note communicated by the Ottoman Government to the Persian Embassy at Constantinople.

(Translation.)

Sublime Porte, July 18, 1876.
NEWS has just been received by telegraph from the Vilayet of Erzeroum that four regiments of Persian troops, under the command of Ikbâl-ad-Dowleh, with two guns and 1,000 horse and foot of the Shekak, Kara Papak, and Cherdavlu tribes, made their appearance in Mergavar, situated in Persian territory, and there burnt villages belonging to Sheikh Abdullah Effendi, as well as the crops and one infirm woman. As Mergavar is two hours distant from the frontier, all the villagers living in the vicinity of the frontier, inspired by fright and panic at these unexpected proceedings, took to flight.

We need not explain or recall to the Embassy of His Imperial Majesty the Shah that the occurrence of such unsatisfactory proceedings on the frontier is completely opposed to that complete peace and friendship which has existed for some time between the two States, and that in particular the responsibility incurred by the employment of so large a military force by Government officials, thereby creating a regrettable situation of this kind, is by no means a light one.

For this reason we beg that the Embassy of His Imperial Majesty the Shah would kindly exert its influence to call the attention of the Persian authorities to this matter, and to appeal to their sense of justice, and that it should endeavour to see to it that a sum of money be provided to indemnify Sheikh Abdullah for the losses and damages now sustained by him, as well as for those which he has suffered in the past, and which up to the present the Persian Government has made no attempt to indemnify.

Furthermore, we beg the Persian Embassy to use its best endeavours to have an inquiry made into the conduct of Ikbâl-ad-Dowleh, and to ascertain his reasons, and, lastly, to furnish the requisite explanations as to the motives for sending so large a military force to the frontier.

We seize, &c.
(Signed) SAFVET.

[7167]

No. 290.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)(No. 87.)
Sir,*Pera, February 24, 1908.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram No. 38 of the 20th instant, I have informed the Sublime Porte of the satisfaction with which His Majesty's Government have learned of the pacific assurances given by the Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburg, adding that they have felt grave anxiety as to the future on account of the reports of Turkey's aggressive action on the frontier and her military preparations.

These assurances were, I understand, given by the Turkish Ambassador in reply to a demand made here by M. Zinoviev for explanations as to the reported concentration of troops in the neighbourhood of the Russian frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

[7373]

No. 291.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received March 2.)(Confidential.)
Sir,*Admiralty, February 29, 1908.*

IN reply to your letter of the 30th December, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to request that you will inform the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that they regret that they have at their disposal no suitable vessel for sale to the Persian Customs authorities.

I am, &c.
(Signed) W. GRAHAM GREENE.

[7318]

No. 292.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 64.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 2, 1908.

BANK. There is a strong report that German Bank will be opened in the autumn; and Mr. Rabino's resignation (see my telegram No. 51 of the 20th ultimo) is known to the German Legation.

[7264]

No. 293.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 65.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 2, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier and Persian Circular.

Russian Minister and I think that a verbal communication in the sense indicated in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 33 would be useful. If Great Britain and Russia can claim to have obtained the evacuation of Sujbulak, it might perhaps be made in writing. Neither M. de Hartwig nor I have any clear information as to German action at Constantinople, or of its results.

Reference is to your telegram No. 62 to Sir A. Nicolson.

[7391]

No. 294.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 2.)

(No. 66.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 2, 1908.

A PROPOSAL for the engagement of European advisers to all Government Departments is seriously contemplated by the Assembly, who realize that the reform of the Administration is impossible without external assistance.

Three Ministers who are entirely under German influence are included in the present Cabinet, as reconstructed last week. I am, moreover, assured that the President of the Assembly—though he denied it in conversation with me—in order to become Minister for Foreign Affairs, is thinking of resigning his appointment to London. An attempt to introduce German advisers may thus quite possibly be made, either by application to the German Government or by private engagement. I am conveying to the Minister for Foreign Affairs a warning in regard to the complications which would follow such a step.

[5953]

No. 295.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 47.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

TELEGRAPHS in Seistan. Please refer to your telegram No. 44 of the 13th ultimo.

Before instructions are sent to His Majesty's Consul, it would, in view of the attitude adopted by your Russian colleague, be preferable to wait for explanations from the Russian Government. Discussion of details as to procedure will shortly be commenced by us with the latter.

Is there at present any likelihood of favourable opportunity arising for obtaining Persian Government's consent to the exchange?

[7391]

No. 296.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 52.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

NEW Persian Minister in London. Please refer to your telegram No. 66.

Some time has now elapsed since His Majesty agreed to appointment of the Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh, and the Legation in London has now long been unoccupied. You may point this out to the Persian Government if you think it advisable, and express to them the surprise of His Majesty's Government that the new Minister has not yet set out for England.

[5953]

No. 297.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 64.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

SEISTAN telegraph line.

Please refer to telegram No. 44 from Tehran.

You should report how the Russian Government explain the incident.

[7088]

No. 298.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 65.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier dispute.

In reply to your telegram No. 36, I agree that as evacuation of Soujboulak has taken place, it would be useful to make a communication to the Government at Tehran.

In order that Mr. Marling's instructions may be identical with those of M. Hartwig, you should telegraph draft which M. Isvolsky proposes to send to the latter.

[7085]

No. 299.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 66.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

PLEASE refer to Sir N. O'Connor's telegram No. 51 of yesterday and Mr. Wratislaw's of the day before.

How is the present situation regarded by the Russian Government?

Please inquire and report.

[7391]

No. 300.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 67.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

SITUATION in Persia. With reference to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 66 of the 2nd instant.

Appointment of German advisers could not be tolerated by us.

You should inquire what are the views of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and suggest that joint instructions should be sent to Tehran, for discretionary use, to the effect that the Persian Government should be informed that, if any question arises as to the employment of European advisers, the Russian and British Governments will insist on application being made to themselves in the first instance. This does not, of course, necessarily entail the advisers being of Russian or British nationality, but the candidates must be recommended by the Russian and British Governments.

Our Representatives at Tehran should be instructed to add that, if the advice of their Governments is disregarded by the Persian Government, measures for the safeguarding of their interests will be taken by the two Powers.

[5952]

No. 301.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 55.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 59 of the 20th ultimo, relative to (1) the transfer to Russia of the right now enjoyed by Great Britain over the Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line in consideration of an undertaking on the part of the Russian Government not to oppose the prolongation of the concessions for the British telegraph lines in Persia; and (2) the exchange of the Meshed-Tehran for the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph line, I transmit to your Excellency herewith copy of a letter from the India Office,* setting forth their views on the points raised in Mr. Marling's telegrams Nos. 41 and 42 of the 8th February, and in your telegram No. 25 of the 9th February.

I approve your Excellency's suggestion to propose to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the two questions under discussion should be treated separately. With regard to the order in which they should be dealt with it would, in my opinion, be preferable that the question of the exchange of the Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad lines should be first considered; for whenever the Russian Government raise the question of the cession to them of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line, His Majesty's Government, on their part, will be obliged to broach that of the prolongation of the British Concessions with regard to which the Persian Government are likely to raise difficulties.

Your Excellency should inform M. Isvolsky accordingly, explaining, if necessary, that the Russian Government are of course under no obligation to postpone action with regard to the Tehran-Khanikin line, but that it is expected that criticism will be aroused in this country if the question of the prolongation of the Concessions is not dealt with simultaneously. The point is not one on which your Excellency should insist, but, should you find it necessary to raise it, you should draw M. Isvolsky's attention to the advantage which Russia would gain if the prolongation of the British Concessions were secured before, or simultaneously with, the cession to

No. 227.

her of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line, since in that case she would enter into possession of rights valid till 1945 instead of till 1925 only.

His Majesty's Government see no objection to instructing Mr. Marling to give to the Persian Government, in concert with the Russian Minister, the explanations suggested by M. Isvolsky, subject to the condition indicated above that the two questions should be treated separately, that of the exchange of lines being dealt with first.

Your Excellency is authorized to communicate to M. Isvolsky, in accordance with your suggestion, the inclosed copies of the Telegraph Conventions of 1865 and 1872,* and to inform him of the date—namely, March 1868—when the Tehran-Khanikin line was handed over to the Persian authorities; but as the reason for this step, which is given in paragraph 4 of the inclosed Minute of the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department,† was that this line was considered to be of little value, it would be preferable to avoid making any explanation on this point.

I am, &c.

(Signed) E. GREY.

[5944]

No. 302.

Foreign Office to Treasury.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 2, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copies of correspondence relative to the proposed acquisition by the Indo-European Telegraph Department of the control of the telegraph line from Borasjun to Mohammera.‡

As will be seen from these papers, this suggestion was originally made in 1902 by the Persian Government themselves, and was submitted to His Majesty's Government by Sir A. Hardinge, at that time His Majesty's Minister at Tehran. It was decided, however, for reasons which appear in the correspondence, not to put the plan into execution at the time.

The Government of India revived the proposal in May of last year, and it was warmly supported by Sir C. Spring-Rice, His Majesty's Minister, and Mr. Marling, now His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran.

Both Sir E. Grey and Mr. Secretary Morley fully recognized that British interests, both political and commercial, would derive important benefits from the proposed arrangement, but they nevertheless agreed in considering that the moment was inopportune for approaching the Persian Government on the subject.

Mr. Marling is now of opinion that no better opportunity than the present for taking this step is likely to occur in the near future, and I am accordingly to express the hope that the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury may see their way to sanction the charge on Imperial revenues of one-half of the necessary expense, the remainder of which will be borne by the Government of India.

It will be seen from the India Office letter of the 18th instant that the cost of the survey and temporary repair of the line would amount to about 300l., and its permanent repair to about 1,000l., while the expense of its maintenance is estimated at 600l. a-year.

The charge for which sanction is now asked, therefore, amounts to 650l. initial and 300l. a-year recurring.

I am to request you to recommend this proposal to the favourable consideration of their Lordships, and to draw their particular attention to the weighty arguments to be advanced in its favour.

Their Lordships are aware that by the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention of the 31st August, 1907, that portion of Persia which lies outside the British and Russian spheres of influence is open to the commercial enterprise of all nations. It is therefore clearly to the advantage of Great Britain to lose no time in developing such interests as she already possesses in that region, and in acquiring such further interests as will be of use to her in the future, thereby forestalling the action of other countries in the same direction. Signs of increased foreign activity in this respect are

* Not printed.

† India Office, July 4; to ditto, July 22; India Office, September 11; to ditto, September 18; to Sir C. Spring-Rice, No. 161, September 18; India Office, October 30; Mr. Marling, No. 267, December 6; to India Office, December 31, 1907; and ante, Nos. 111, 160, and 225.

‡ Minute by Mr. Kirk.

already perceptible, and any hesitation on the part of His Majesty's Government in acquiring the control of the Mohammera-Borasjun line greatly increases the danger of its passing definitely into foreign hands, to the grave detriment of British interests.

Moreover, the political and commercial drawbacks attaching to the present disorganized condition of the line are very considerable, and there would appear to be no prospect of remedying this unsatisfactory state of things otherwise than by the adoption of the present proposal. Such, at least, is the opinion of the India Office, of the Government of India, and of His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, as shown in the India Office letters of the 4th July and the 11th September last; while Mr. Marling, in his despatch No. 267 of the 6th December last, points out the great inconvenience of the lack of communication between His Majesty's Legation at Tehran and His Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Ahwaz caused by the present imperfect working of the line.

I am to add that, in view of the fact that the question is one of some urgency, as will be seen from the last paragraph of Mr. Marling's despatch No. 267 of the 6th December last, Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive an early intimation of their Lordships' decision on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[7467] No. 303.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 3.)

(No. 37.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburg, March 3, 1908.*

GERMANY and Persia. Your telegram No. 67 of yesterday's date.
M. Isvolsky has no information as regards the European Advisers for the Persian Government (see Mr. Marling's telegram No. 66), but he considers question a serious one. He is of opinion that it may be necessary to adopt a stern tone with the Persian Government, and will give me a reply as to the instructions which should be sent on the subject. I will mention the matter to him again to-morrow.

[7468] No. 304.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 3.)

(No. 52.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, March 3, 1908.*

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

With reference to my telegram No. 51 of the 1st instant, I am informed by the Grand Vizier that instructions have to-day been telegraphed to Tahir Pasha by order of the Sultan to return to Urmia and continue to negotiate with the Persian Commissioner.

[6677] No. 305.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 53.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March 3, 1908.*

IMPERIAL Bank of Persia's contract for minting. I have received your despatch No. 21 of the 14th ultimo.

I leave it to your discretion to make following observations to Persian Government.

You may inform Persian Government (provided the contract has not been concluded in the meanwhile) that we fail to understand why they have not carried out the obligations incumbent upon them by the terms of the Bank's Concession.

His Majesty's Government must demand that no further delay shall occur before the contract is concluded.

[6851]

No. 306.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 3, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of telegrams from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* relative to the question of guards for the protection of the servants and property of the Oil Concessions Syndicate in the neighbourhood of Ahwaz.

It will be observed from the latter of these two messages that His Majesty's Consul at Ahwaz considers the moment inopportune for pressing the Bakhtiari Chiefs to permit the payment of the native guards by the Syndicate, and that, in view of the fact that the question of whether the enterprise can be profitably worked will probably be settled within six months, he strongly deprecates the removal of the Indian guards before the expiration of that period.

Mr. Marling fully shares the opinion expressed by Captain Lorimer.

It will be remembered that in the letter from the Treasury of the 7th December, 1907 (see Confidential print, Persia, December 9, section 3) the maintenance of an increased Consular guard at Ahwaz was authorized for a period of six months. The reinforcements arrived at their destination about the 17th December, so that approximately three months and a-half have yet to elapse before the expiration of the time sanctioned.

I am to state that in these circumstances it appears to Sir E. Grey to be unnecessary to come to an immediate decision as to the advisability of retaining the increased guard for a yet further period.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[6851]

No. 307.

Foreign Office to Mr. Preece.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 3, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 15th ultimo, relative to the question of the payment of guards for the protection of the servants and property of the Oil Concessions Syndicate near Ahwaz, I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to inform you that he has received a further telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran reporting that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz, the moment is inopportune for urging the Bakhtiari Chiefs to agree to the payment of these guards by the Syndicate, and that Captain Lorimer accordingly proposes not to raise this question pending the settlement of the matters now under negotiation.

Mr. Marling adds that he has left the question of the payment or suspension of the instalments due in November last to Captain Lorimer's discretion.

I am, &c.
(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[7587]

No. 308.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 67.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, March 4, 1908.*

BELGIAN Customs officials and conduct of the German Chargé d'Affaires.

I yesterday received the call of the German Minister, Count Quadt. He said that the German Foreign Office had been much distressed at the repeated complaints received from London and St. Petersburg respecting the conduct of the German Chargé d'Affaires. He (Count Quadt) could not believe, in face of the repeated assurances given by the German Government to Russia and England, that Baron Richthofen had sought to play the rôle attributed to him. The German Legation had not taken any steps whatever with the object of replacing the Belgian Customs officials by Germans. He would always be ready to give explanations, for which he hoped that I

would ask him before reporting home, if His Majesty's Legation believed it had any cause for complaint. He would do his best to act in accordance with the letter and spirit of the assurances given by his Government and of his instructions, which were most stringent.

I replied that the results of Baron Richthofen's proceedings were plainly evident in the present endeavours of the Persian Government to play off Germany against Russia and England, and that nothing could alter my convictions as to his conduct. I warmly thanked Count Quadt, however, for his frankness, and said that I rejoiced at the prospect of the German Legation's return to the very correct attitude observed under Herr Stemrich, the late German Minister.

Count Quadt, who has spoken in a similar sense to the Russian Minister, said that he was doing his utmost to impress on all the Persians whom he saw that Germany would not lend herself to these "playing off" tactics. A large loan, he went on to affirm, was necessary to Persia. Foreign control, in the shape of an international "caisse," or something analogous, might thus be entailed. I replied that my personal view was that His Majesty's Government would not favour the idea, but that I had no knowledge of your views on such a proposal.

Count Quadt in conclusion asked me to inform you of the substance of his assurances.

[7373] No. 309.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 54.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 4, 1908.

THE Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have no ship suitable for selling to Persian Government, as mentioned in your telegram No. 402 of 1906.

[6680] No. 310.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 4, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 19th ultimo relative to the proposed transfer to Russia of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran dealing with this subject.*

It will be observed that the local manager of the Indo-European Telegraph Company is of opinion that the financial side of this question offers no difficulty, and that he proposes that, instead of the Company taking over the existing wire, the special Convention between them and the Persian Government contemplated in the Agreement of the 14th June, 1906, should provide for the construction by the Company of a new telegraph line from Kazvin to Hamadan, and for the transfer to them of the existing wire from thence to the Turkish frontier.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive an expression of Mr. Secretary Morley's views on Mr. Casey's proposal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[7645] No. 311.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 5.)

Sir,

India Office, March 4, 1908.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Mallet's letter, dated the 28th ultimo, relative to the circumstances in which certain native boats, with head-quarters at Lingah, are now plying under the German flag in the Persian Gulf.

In reply, I am to state that Mr. Morley concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of

State for Foreign Affairs to await the further report promised by His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire before considering the steps to be taken in the matter, and that the Government of India have been informed accordingly.

Copy of a telegram from the Viceroy on the subject, dated the 26th ultimo, was communicated to the Foreign Office on the 28th ultimo.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[7684]

No. 312.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 5.)

(No. 68.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 5, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah telegraphed from Kasr-i-Shirin as follows on the 2nd instant:—

"A caravan of fifty camels, laden with ammunition and military stores, has arrived at Khanikin, and approximately the same number have been dispatched to Mandali.

"Following is detail of troops now at Khanikin:—

"Two infantry regiments 500 strong each (a third regiment is collecting).

"A cavalry regiment of some 500 sabres with 170 horses.

"A detachment of mounted infantry on mules, 100 strong.

"Forty-five gunners with three guns and twenty-eight horses.

"I propose to ride into Khanikin and return the same day. Have you any objection?"

I have agreed to Captain Haworth's proceeding to Khanikin as suggested.

[7767]

No. 313.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 30th January, relative to the capture of the Dayir pirates.

India Office, March 5, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 313.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

Bushire, December 15, 1907.

I HAVE to-day telegraphed to Tehran regarding pirates as follows:—

"Your telegram No. 169.

"My recommendation that, until the *fait accompli* had been reported, Persian Government should not be informed of delivery of prisoners to Sheikh of Mohammerah was made on good grounds, and I understand from your telegram of the 13th instant that you accepted it. I wish that inquiries could have been made from me as to reasons which prompted my recommendation, if it was not understood or seemed difficult to accept; a reference could then, on receipt of my explanations, perhaps, have been made to higher authority, if point was doubtful. As Sheikh can now be primed or instructed before I reach Mohammerah the hopes I expressed as to his probable attitude must be largely discounted."

(Repeated to Foreign Department with Viceroy.)

Inclosure 2 in No. 313.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bushire, December 21, 1907.*
 FOLLOWING telegram dated the 20th instant received from Mr. Marling:—

"Your proposal to destroy pirate stronghold by one of His Majesty's ships, accompanied by 'Persepolis,' or with a Persian official on board His Majesty's ship, was submitted by me to Foreign Office, from whom the following reply has been received:—

"Persian Government may be approached, and presence of Persian official on board His Majesty's ship may be suggested."

"To-day a further telegram has been received instructing me, in the event of Persian Government objecting, to refer again to Foreign Office.

"Private. Persian Government at Tehran is at present non-existent."

Inclosure 3 in No. 313.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.) *Bushire, December 22, 1907.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, copies of telegrams in connection with the correspondence regarding the Humaidi pirates lately captured near Bunder Rig.

Inclosure 4 in No. 313.

Mr. Marling to Major Cox.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, December 15, 1907.*

PIRACIES. Your telegram No. 732.
 Foreign Office have telegraphed as follows:—

"Pirates should be put to death, if they are guilty of murder; but it should in all cases be stipulated, in delivering them to native authorities, that they are not to be subjected to torture or any barbarous treatment."

Captain of His Majesty's ship "Highflyer" should be informed accordingly.

With reference to your telegram No. 738, Sheikh will hear nothing from here, so that there is no cause for uneasiness. Please say when you will dispatch prisoners to Mohammerah.

This telegram should be repeated to Calcutta.

Inclosure 5 in No. 313.

Captain Trevor to Mr. Marling.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bushire, December 16, 1907.*

It is expected that Resident will return on Wednesday next. He sailed with pirates yesterday.

Inclosure 6 in No. 313.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Bushire, December 28, 1907.*
 I HAVE telegraphed to Mr. Marling as follows:—

"Your telegram of the 20th instant.

"In case terms of the communication to Persian Government may be affected by the information, I report the following facts:—

"One of Customs Administration's steam-launches having been forcibly detained in chancery by Siral Khan, latter is at present moment at direct issue with the Administration. I believe that, owing to inefficiency of 'Persepolis,' Customs Administration have asked that our assistance should be requested; they would be only too glad to see Siral Khan punished. On the other hand, an appeal to the Medjliss is said to have been made by Siral Khan."

Inclosure 7 in No. 313.

Mr. Marling to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, January 17, 1908.*
 I HAVE sent the following telegram to Foreign Office and repeated to Bushire:—

"I should have said in my telegram No. 378 that Cox proposed destruction of strongholds of Chief of Dashti in default of payment of 15,000 rupees, this be (sic) to be (?) distributed as compensation to victims of piracies.

"The oversight is much regretted.

"Persian Government decline our assistance, asserting their willingness to undertake destruction themselves.

"I can, if you think it desirable, correct mistake with Persian Government, but I submit that a better moral effect will be produced by the more forcible measure, provided it is carried out effectively. This could be assured if I intimate to the Persian Government that one of His Majesty's ships will watch the operations, and that officer in command has instructions to complete work if it is not carried out to his satisfaction. It will certainly not be done effectively if the operation is left in the hands of Persian Government, for Governor-General of Gulf ports is a close friend of the Chief."

[7755]

No. 314.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 2nd instant, relative to the Consular escort at Shiraz.

India Office, March 5, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 314.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, March 2, 1908.*
 SEE telegrams dated the 10th ultimo from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran. Shiraz.

In reply, Mr. Marling has been informed that increased escort will be retained for full period of six months covered by arrangement with Treasury unless situation improves. At present there is no need to decide as to future retention.

[7756]

No. 315.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 3rd instant, relative to the Seistan branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia.

India Office, March 5, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 315.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

March 3, 1908.

IMPERIAL Bank of Persia, Seistan branch.

Please see letter of 5th ultimo to Imperial Bank which was forwarded with letter of 14th ultimo from Political Secretary, India Office.

After inquiring whether it is desired that Seistan branch shall be maintained in future, Bank add that, if so, increased subsidy will be necessary, in order that present annual loss to Bank may be covered.

I shall be glad to learn your opinion on question whether payment of any subsidy shall be continued.

[7757]

No. 316.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of a telegram to the Viceroy, dated the 3rd instant, relative to the use of the German flag by native dhows in the Persian Gulf.

India Office, March 5, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 316.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P.

India Office, March 3, 1908.

USE of German flag by Lingah dhows. Your telegram of the 26th February.

Before considering steps to be taken, we must await further report promised in paragraph 4 of Resident's letter of the 22nd December, which has been received through Foreign Office. Meanwhile no complaints of German action should be made locally. Action will depend on whether procedure of German Consul was legal or otherwise.

[7840]

No. 317.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, and with reference to India Office letter of the 25th ultimo, copy of a telegram from the Viceroy, dated the 4th instant, relative to the retention of a British signaller at Turbat-i-Haidari.

India Office, March 6, 1908.

Inclosure in No. 317.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

March 4, 1908.

(Telegraphic.) P.

PERSIAN telegraphs. Your telegram of the 25th ultimo.

Unless similar privilege is conceded to Russians on Khaf-Seistan section, it would seem difficult, under terms of "Arrangement" of the 18th August, to press for retention of British signaller at Turbat-i-Haidari.

[7811]

No. 318.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 69.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 6, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following is substance of Memoranda in writing (translations of which have reached me from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw)—1, addressed by Turkish to Persian Commissioner, 2, the latter's reply:—

1. That the frontier laid down in the Treaties of 1639, 1727, 1736, 1746, and 1823, which are confirmed by the Erzeroum Treaty of 1846, is the rightful one, and that no claim to them is constituted by temporary Persian interference, namely, occupation and administration in certain districts.

2. That, as is shown in Article IX of the Treaty of Erzeroum, all earlier instruments are superseded by that Treaty; ancient occupation of the greater part of Asia Minor could, for example, be proved by Persia.

I am forwarding by post copies of the documents in question.

[7846]

No. 319.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, March 6, 1908.

IDENTIC note to Persian Government.

Foreign Office telegram No. 65 of the 2nd instant.

I am informed by M. Isvolsky that M. de Hartwig has been instructed to concert with his British colleague in drawing up a note somewhat in the following terms for communication to the Persian Government:—

The Persian Government will have been able to convince themselves that the joint steps of Great Britain and Russia, the two States which have played in the Turco-Persian differences a special part dictated by the progress of historical events, have produced the result which was to be expected, as the evacuation of Soujboulak by the Turkish forces is an accomplished fact. As the two Powers propose in the future to follow the same benevolent course towards Persia, it appears desirable for the advantage of that country that she should continue, as she has done in the past, to confide the protection of her interests in the above differences to the same two States.

The exact wording should be left to the two Representatives.

Minister for Foreign Affairs hopes that you will furnish Mr. Marling with similar instructions.

[7971]

No. 320.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 6.)

(No. 54.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, March 6, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Tabreez, dated the 6th March, No. 6:—

"On 3rd instant the Agent at Miandoab telegraphed that there remained in Soujboulak only 300 Ottoman troops, and again on the 6th that the Persian Governor is moving there with some troops."

[6888]

No. 321.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 27. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 6, 1908.

SIR LEPEL GRIFFIN and Sir Thomas Jackson called at this Office on the 27th ultimo on behalf of the Imperial Bank of Persia, and were received by Sir C. Hardinge and Mr. Mallet.

The object of their visit was to explain that the Bank had lent sums to the Persian Government amounting to about 500,000*l.*, of which they could not obtain repayment. They stated that the Russian Bank was in a similar plight, and left a statement, copy of which is inclosed,^{*} of the indebtedness of the Persian Government to the two institutions. In the case of the Russian Bank this statement is only approximate.

They begged his Majesty's Government seriously to consider the possibility of making, in conjunction with the Russian Government, a large loan to the Persian Government.

It was pointed out to them that it would be useless, in view of the anarchy now prevailing in Persia, to endeavour to float a Persian loan without a substantial guarantee by His Majesty's Government, and that it is not customary to give such guarantees. It was explained further that the sufficiency of the revenues derived from the Persian customs as a security, after a new burden had been imposed upon them, would be doubtful, and nothing could be done until after the new Financial Adviser had arrived at Tehran and had been able to report whether there was a prospect of the restoration of the financial equilibrium in the future.

After some further conversation these two gentlemen retired with an expression of the hope that His Majesty's Government would co-operate with the Imperial Bank in the protection of their interests even more actively in the future than they had in the past.

They stated that the embarrassing position in which the Bank now find themselves is largely due to the bad administration of Mr. Rabino, the Manager-in-chief at Tehran.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[6745]

No. 322.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Hardinge.

(No. 22.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 6, 1908.

YOU will have observed that in his telegram No. 49 of the 14th ultimo His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran reported that M. Mornard, the Belgian Administrator of Customs in Persia, had been violently attacked in the Persian Assembly, and but for the intervention of Mr. Marling and the Russian Minister, might have been dismissed.

Mr. Marling further reported that the German Chargé d'Affaires had made use of the opportunity thus offered to urge the Persian Government to dismiss all the Belgian Customs officials and to engage Germans in their place, and had even told his Belgian colleague that he had been approached by the Persian Government with a request that Germans might be provided for this purpose.

On receipt of this intelligence, His Majesty's Government lost no time in proposing to the Russian Government that His Majesty's and the Russian Representatives at Tehran should receive instructions to inform the Persian Government that, in view of the fact that the revenues of the Persian Customs were pledged for the service of the British and Russian loans, the two Governments could not on any terms consent to their administration being placed under the control of the subjects of a great Power. The two Governments must therefore insist on the withdrawal by the Persian Government of their request for the engagement of German officials, and unless this demand was complied with within a short period, must jointly consider what steps should be taken for the enforcement of their wishes.

The Russian Government having expressed their willingness to act on this suggestion, and having furnished their Minister at Tehran with the necessary instructions,

^{*} See No. 270.

Mr. Marling was authorized by telegraph on the 26th ultimo to confer with M. de Hartwig as to the advisability of making representations in that sense.

You should take an opportunity of bringing to the notice of the Belgian Government the support afforded to their subjects by His Majesty's Government in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[6679]

No. 323.

Foreign Office to Mr. Preece.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 6, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 15th ultimo, on the subject of the relations between the Oil Concessions Syndicate and the Bakhtiari Khans, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,^{*} forwarding copies of correspondence relative to the payment of the instalment due to the Khans in November 1907.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[6676]

No. 324.

Foreign Office to Persian Transport Company.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 6, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith, for the information of your Board, copies of two despatches from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,[†] on the subject of Messrs. Lynch Brothers' construction account with the Bakhtiari Khans for the Ahwaz-Ispahan road.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[7893]

No. 325.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 7.)

(No. 53.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, March 6, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Following telegram, dated to-day, No. 21, received from Mr. Wratislaw, regarding the question of the desirability of changing the frontier Commissioners. (See Mr. Marling's telegram No. 72 of the 8th instant):—

"As long as Taher Pasha is the President of the Commission I do not think that there is any chance of a satisfactory solution being arrived at, and I understand that sooner than resume his functions under the same conditions he will resign his appointment.

"Daniel Pasha, who expressed noble sentiments so long as he was a subordinate and is jealous of his chief, would be more suitable, though now that he is himself at the head of the Turkish Commission he has modified his views. He received a Russian education, and, I believe, asked the Russian Vice-Consul to advise his appointment. However, all depends on the nature of the instructions sent from head-quarters.

"Though the Persian Commissioner, Mechtshen, is not an ideal negotiator, I do not think that any available successor would be in any way better, and Mechtshen has now acquired a certain knowledge of the frontier question. He has had a private difference of opinion with the Russian Vice-Consul; but they have now made it up, so the latter has probably changed his opinion of him."

^{*} No. 254.

[†] Nos. 202 and 251.

[7969]

No. 326.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 7.)

(No. 70.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 7, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines.

With reference to your telegram No. 47 of the 2nd instant, I learn from M. de Hartwig, to whom I have given details of cost of upkeep, obligations of Persian Government, &c., on the Tehran-Meshed line, that similar information respecting the Seistan line can be best furnished in St. Petersburg.

He and I think that it will not much matter what moment is chosen for taking the first step towards effecting the exchange, if the matter can be represented as one of merely departmental convenience and economy. We therefore think that the best means will be for the transaction to be submitted to the Persian Telegraph Department by the Russian Telegraph Superintendent and by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, the Legations taking no part unless absolutely necessary.

The Superintendent here is willing to act as desired. I presume that the fact that the Indo-European Telegraph Department is not immediately concerned in the transfer will not be an obstacle.

[7846]

No. 327.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 56.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 7, 1908.

PLEASE refer to the telegram No. 39 of the 6th instant from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the subject of the Turco-Persian frontier.

I request that you will, in concert with your Russian colleague, draw up note approximately in sense indicated in above-mentioned telegram.

[8001]

No. 328.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 71.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 8, 1908.

SITUATION at Shiraz.

The town is in a ferment, as a result of the assassination yesterday of Kawam-ul-Mulk; no danger to Europeans is anticipated by His Majesty's Consul.

[8002]

No. 329.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 72.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 8, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Please refer to your telegram No. 55 of yesterday.

The subject of my telegram No. 16, to His Majesty's Consul-General, was the recommendation put forward by the Russian Vice-Consul, that a new Persian Commissioner be dispatched, and that Daniel Pasha be appointed First Turkish Delegate, upon which I inquired Mr. Wratishaw's views.

[8000]

No. 330.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 40.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, March 8, 1908.

I DULY communicated to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs substance of information contained in Mr. Wratishaw's telegram of the 29th ultimo and Sir N. O'Connor's telegram, No. 51, of the 1st instant, and, as instructed by your telegram

No. 66 of the 2nd instant, inquired what view the Russian Government took of present situation on the Turco-Persian frontier.

I have this evening received an urgent and confidential communication from M. Isvolsky. According to a telegram received from the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, Taher Pasha has been instructed to return to Urumia and continue negotiations with the Persian Commissioner. Russian Government think it very likely that Taher has secret instructions from Yildiz which are at variance with Ottoman Delegates' general instructions. On the other hand, there seems to be no doubt whatever, from information received from Urumia, that the First Persian Delegate's personal relations with the First Turkish Delegate are very strained, and that he is not competent to fulfil his mission satisfactorily. In these circumstances there is danger of the discussions failing entirely, and the only way to prevent such a contingency, although it might be for a time only, would be to substitute some one else for the First Persian Delegate.

The dispatch of a new Commissioner would involve much delay, and the appointment of Mustechar-ed-Dowleh, one of the Persian Delegates, who is recommended by the Russian Vice-Consul at Urumia as likely to prove a competent substitute for the First Delegate, would save time. The Russian Minister at Tehran has therefore been instructed to recommend the Persian Government to adopt this course, as no other proposal has been suggested which would be likely to be successful. M. de Hartwig has also been directed to draw the attention of the Persian Government to the concentration of Turkish troops in the vilayets bordering on the Persian frontier and to point out the dangers with which Persia is thereby threatened.

Russian Government would be glad to know at your earliest convenience whether you share the above views, and will instruct Mr. Marling to make the proposal to the Persian Government in regard to the Persian Commissioner. They consider no time should be lost, as the present situation demands prompt measures.

[8043]

No. 331.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 118.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 2, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky, stating that M. de Hartwig is of opinion that the present moment is a favourable one for presenting an identic note to the Persian Government in respect to their having addressed all the Powers on the subject of Turkish aggressions on Persian territory.

I told his Excellency that I had been instructed to suggest that representations at Tehran had better, in your opinion, be deferred until the Persian Government repeated their mode of procedure, and I gave him a summary of the reasons which led you to take that view, but as he had sent me the inclosed letter I would communicate again with you and ascertain your opinion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 331.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Le 15 (28) Février, 1908.

JE viens de recevoir un télégramme de M. de Hartwig, m'annonçant que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Schah a reçu des nouvelles confirmant le fait de l'évacuation de Sooudj-Boulak par les troupes de Fazil Pacha. Ce résultat étant attribué à Téhéran exclusivement à l'action commune de l'Angleterre et de la Russie, le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Perse vient d'exprimer à cet égard, par l'intermédiaire de notre Représentant à Téhéran, sa reconnaissance au Gouvernement Impérial.

M. de Hartwig croit qu'il serait opportun de profiter de cette occasion pour transmettre, conjointement avec son collègue d'Angleterre, en réponse au télégramme Circulaire Persan, une note identique tendant à exposer au Gouvernement Persan le rôle tout particulier que l'Angleterre et la Russie ont joué de tout temps dans les différends

Turco-Persans. Notre Représentant est d'avis qu'un pareil mode d'agir fournirait à Mouchir-oud-Dovleh l'occasion de faire ressortir aux yeux du Medjliss l'intervention commune des deux Puissances à Constantinople à sa juste valeur.

Je vous serais très reconnaissant de vouloir bien me faire savoir si le Cabinet de Londres est enclin à partager cet avis, et, le cas échéant, de provoquer des instructions à Mr. Marling dans le sens de ma présente lettre.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,
(Signé) ISVOLSKY.

[8073] No. 332.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 99.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March 4, 1908.*
I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from the Military Attaché to this Embassy a report on recent movements of Turkish troops to Khanikin on the Turco-Persian frontier.

I have, &c.
(In the absence of the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 332.

Colonel Surtees to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 1.)

Sir, *Constantinople, March 4, 1908.*
I HAVE the honour to invite your Excellency's attention to the fact that a steady movement of Ottoman troops is taking place towards Khanikin, thus—

February 5th, 1908.—100 cavalry, 3 guns, and 200 boxes of ammunition arrived at Khanikin from Bagdad.

February 7th.—150 additional cavalry on mules arrived at Khanikin.

February 13th.—One battalion, 400 strong, arrived at Khanikin.

February 24th.—55 camel loads of ammunition and 38 of military stores sent to Khanikin from Bagdad, whence it is reported that the Ihtiat are being called out, and animals seized for transport.

March 3rd.—Orders had been received for the dispatch of 4 battalions of infantry from Diarbekir to Khanikin, so soon as they could be replaced by Redifs.

The object of this movement is not at present clear, but it is suggested that it has been considered desirable to have an effective force at hand wherewith to cope with any possible rising on the part of the Shiaks, who predominate numerically in this district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. CONYERS SURTEES, *Colonel, General Staff,
Military Attaché.*

[8281] No. 333.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 9.)

(No. 41.)

(Telegraphic.) R. *St. Petersburg, March 9, 1908.*

YOUR telegram No. 67: Foreign Adviser to Persian Government.

Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me, from information received from Russian Minister at Tehran, it would appear that the probability of Persian Government appointing Foreign Advisers appears rather remote. Nevertheless, the Russian Government quite agree with His Majesty's Government that the interests of the two countries would be seriously affected if the Persian Government at any time thought fit to appoint Advisers other than those recommended by the two Governments, and that it would be well, therefore, to make representations to the Persian Government should the question assume more definite form.

In any case, Russian Government consider that it would be desirable to allow French Financial Adviser to take possession of his new post, and, it is to be hoped, to make for himself a stable and firm position.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[6683]

No. 334.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 32.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 9, 1908.*
I HAVE received your despatch No. 30 of the 14th ultimo, relative to the proposed enlargement of the existing German school at Tehran, and the grant by the Persian Government of an annual subvention for its maintenance.

I concur in your opinion that such a scheme, if carried out, would be in the highest degree prejudicial to British interests in Persia, and that the disproportionate increase in the number of German members of the Sanitary Council which, as you point out, might result from it, would be most undesirable.

I doubt, however, whether the counter project of a national university with numerous foreign teachers, by which the French Minister hopes to prevent the execution of the German scheme, has any chance of success at this moment when money for such purposes is lacking, and jealousy of any extension of foreign influence in Persia is so strong in the Assembly and in the country at large.

These conditions will, of course, equally tend to render the success of the German scheme itself less probable, and it may well fail through the opposition which it will excite, and through the inability of the Persian Government to give adequate security for the payment of the annual subsidy.

Moreover, the departure of Ehtesham-es-Saltane for London will deprive the scheme of its most prominent supporter, and your action in endeavouring to hasten that event has my entire approval.

For these reasons I do not regard the German scheme as at all likely to be carried out in the near future, and any direct attempt on the part of His Majesty's Government to prevent its realization would, therefore, in my opinion, not only be superfluous, but would expose them at the same time to the charge of hindering the German Government in a civilizing mission.

You should therefore confine your action in the matter to doing all that you can, unobtrusively, to frustrate this proposal, in co-operation with the Russian Minister.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[8370] No. 335.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 10.)

(No. 73.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, March 10, 1908.*

PLEASE refer to my penultimate telegram of the 10th instant, on the subject of the situation at Shiraz.

Yesterday the eldest son of Kawam-ul-Mulk was also shot at and sustained a severe wound. The leader of the opposing faction has taken refuge with the Governor-General, as the Kawam partizans are clamouring for his blood. Governor-General, who is powerless, even talks of seeking asylum in His Majesty's Consulate.

Strong representations are being made to Persian Government.

[8379] No. 336.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 10.)

(No. 44.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburg, March 10, 1908.*

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. Foreign Office telegram No. 70 of to-day's date.

I venture to point out that Muktesham is name of first Delegate himself. Name of Persian Delegate by whom Russian Government wish to see first Delegate replaced is Mustechar.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[8000] No. 337.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 57.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 10, 1908.

FRONTIER dispute between Turkey and Persia.

Please refer to your telegram No. 72, Mr. Wratislaw's No. 21, and Sir A. Nicolson's No. 40.

Would it be advisable, in your opinion, to urge that Daniel should be appointed as First Delegate on the Turkish Commission?

I authorize you to act in concert with M. Hartwig in recommending that one of the Persian Delegates, by name Mukteshem, should be appointed to immediately replace the First Persian Delegate.

[8281] No. 338.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 58.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 10, 1908.

FOREIGN advisers for Persian Government. With reference to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 41 of the 9th instant.

If you consider that such a step is necessary in the circumstances, you should act in concert with M. Hartwig as to making representations to the Persian Government.

[8490] No. 339.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 74.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 11, 1908.

FOREIGN Advisers for Persia.

Your telegram No. 58 of the 10th March.

Russian Minister and I think that it will be sufficient for the present to give the Persian Government a verbal warning, in the general sense of your telegram No. 51 of the 2nd March, inasmuch as the proposal in Parliament for the introduction of Advisers has been shelved.

[8601] No. 340.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 12.)

(No. 75.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 12, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. Proposal to change Commissioners. Please refer to your telegram No. 57 of the 10th instant.

The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs seems to be somewhat confused (see Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 40). The sole Persian Commissioner is Mohtesham-es-Sultaneh. The post of Commissioner has been declined by Musteshar-ed-Dowleh. The latter is now in Tehran. He is a leading Liberal Deputy.

The Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs admits that a Persian Representative better than Mohtesham-es-Sultaneh would not be forthcoming. Mr. Wratislaw, moreover, considers the latter to be fairly competent, and Mr. Wratislaw's ability and experience should make him a better judge than the Russian Vice-Consul, who has reported unfavourably on the two Commissioners, partly, as Mr. Wratislaw gives me to understand in his private letters, because his personal relations with Mohtesham-es-Sultaneh, though latterly improved, have been strained.

As to Daniel Pasha, Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 22 of the 6th instant contains all that I know of him. Yesterday I discussed the situation with Mushir-ed-Dowleh; the Russian Minister was also present. In our opinion a change in the Persian Representative would only be productive of delay, which would also be created by pressing the Sultan to change the Turkish Commissioner, a step which, in view of the fact that Taher has received orders to return to Urmia, would, in our opinion, be

inadvisable. If satisfactory instructions are sent from Yildiz, it does not, after all, matter much who the Turkish Commissioner is.

The Persian Government asks for the support of England and Russia—M. de Hartwig is strongly urging their request on his Government—in getting instructions sent to the Turkish Commissioner from Yildiz to the effect that negotiations must be on the basis of the recognition of the frontier as lying within the neutral zone. Mohtesham-es-Sultaneh is receiving instructions in this sense from his Government. The latter fear that in the spring the Turks will recommence their aggressions on a large scale unless that be the basis of negotiation. Reports of Turkish military preparations all along the frontier are causing much anxiety here.

[8656]

No. 341.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 13.)

Sir,

India Office, March 11, 1908.

IN reply to your letter, dated the 4th instant, as to the proposed transfer to Russia of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose, for the consideration of Secretary Sir E. Grey, a copy of a note by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department on the two points raised by Mr. Marling's despatch of the 14th February last, viz.:—

1. The possibility that the British rights over this line may be made over to the Indo-European Telegraph Company; and

2. The construction by the Company of a new telegraph line from Kazvin to Hamadan, and the transfer to them of the existing line from Hamadan to Khanikin.

Mr. Morley concurs generally in the views expressed by the Director-in-chief.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 341.

Note on Foreign Office Letter, dated March 4, 1908.

THE most important point brought to notice in Mr. Marling's despatch is that the Russian Minister at Tehran appears to think that, as the Indo-European Telegraph Company is under Russian protection, his Government will be satisfied if the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line are made over to the Company. If it is found that the Russian Government approve of this arrangement, it seems to me it would be good policy on our part to give every assistance towards carrying it out. The Company is one on which the British Government could apply pressure, if necessary; but I have found the Company always anxious to meet the wishes of Government in regard to telegraph questions that have arisen in connection with Cis-Indian Joint Purse matters. I have no reason to think that this attitude would be changed by any concession that the Company obtained in Persia. However, an arrangement of the kind for the transfer of the line would seem to be one for the Company to settle with the Russian Government, as if any direct concern is shown on our side that the Company should get the concession, it may not help to promote this object. If the Russian Government propose the arrangement we could then render assistance in carrying it out.

2. Mr. Marling further states that the manager of the Indo-European Telegraph Company considers that the Company should not take over the line from Tehran to Hamadan, but should construct a new line from Kazvin to Hamadan, and take over the line from Hamadan to Khanikin. I do not think this arrangement is one that there need be any objection to. The Company knows that any section of the line that is taken over will have to be reconstructed. The distance from Tehran to Hamadan is about 170 miles, and the distance from Kazvin to Hamadan is about 125 miles. But the Company's line from Kazvin already runs for about 25 miles along the Kazvin-Hamadan road, so that the Company under their proposal would have to erect only about 100 miles of new line. This would be done at less cost than reconstructing 170

miles of the Persian line, and it is no doubt for this reason that the proposal has been put forward.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

March 5, 1908.

[8683]

No. 342.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 13.)

Sir,

India Office, March 12, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 3rd instant, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the view of Secretary Sir E. Grey, that it is unnecessary to come to an immediate decision as to the advisability of retaining the increased Consular guard at Ahwaz beyond the period of six months for which its maintenance was authorized.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[8785]

No. 343.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 13.)

(No. 76.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 13, 1908.

SUBSIDY to German school.

I received yesterday (the 12th instant) your despatch No. 14 of the 17th ultimo. The first quarterly instalment is due on the 22nd instant.

I propose to remind the Persian Government of our lien on the customs, on which the subsidy is secured, and receipts from which are rapidly declining.

[8601]

No. 344.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 76.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 13, 1908.

PLEASE refer to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 75 respecting frontier dispute between Turkey and Persia.

It would, I consider, be preferable not to take any action under the circumstances.

I should like to have M. Isvolsky's observations on above telegram, the substance of which you should communicate to him.

[8883]

No. 345.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 14.)

Sir,

India Office, March 13, 1908.

WITH reference to the letter of this Department, dated the 11th ultimo, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to state, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the following amounts have been placed to the account of the Secretary of State for India at the Bank of England, in respect of interest on the advance made to the Persian Government:—

£	s.	d.	
10,880	16	7	i.e., four-fifths of 13,601l. 0s. 9d., being interest due 4th April, 1907, on outstanding principal.
476	19	4	i.e., four-fifths of 596l. 4s. 2d., being interest at 5 per cent. on 13,601l. 0s. 9d., for the period 4th April, 1907, to 18th February, 1908.
Total	..	11,357	15 11

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[8873]

No. 346.

Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office.—(Received March 14.)

Sir,

*3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,
March 13, 1908.*

WITH reference to your letter of the 28th October, I am instructed to express the regret of my Board for the misunderstanding which has arisen in regard to the inspection of the bridges on the Ahwaz-Isfahan road. At the same time my Board respectfully maintains that it has acted throughout in a perfectly correct and business-like manner.

We asked that the Chiefs should be consulted in regard to the inspection (our letter of the 9th November, 1906, to you); after much delay, which we naturally attributed to obstruction on the part of the Chiefs, we received through you Captain Lorimer's approval of the inspection (your letter to us of the 21st May, 1907); we consequently inferred that the Chiefs had been convinced or overruled, and informed you that we had issued instructions for an inspection at the earliest favourable moment (our letter to you of the 3rd July, 1907). These instructions were sent to and acted on by our agents abroad, who, on the 10th August, telegraphed that Mr. Webber would be detailed for this work about mid-September. Subsequently, these plans had to be altered. Mr. Barlow, who had made the inspection on previous occasions, and who had been ordered home on sick leave, was ultimately permitted by his medical adviser in Bagdad to undertake the work. Our agents dispatched him at once to Ahwaz, and he started for the bridges on the 28th August. Advice of this alteration in the arrangements reached us only by letter on the 9th September. The inspection there was far advanced when we received your letter of the 16th September, indicating that His Majesty's Vice-Consul desired further time for reference to the Chiefs. It was consequently out of our power to give effect to his wishes.

We duly transmitted to our agent at Ahwaz instructions to invite Captain Lorimer to scrutinize every item of the cost to be incurred in the work, and our instructions were carried out as soon as Captain Lorimer returned to Ahwaz. We have since received advice that he has approved the accounts submitted to him.

As we did not carry out the inspection till two months after intimating that we were proceeding to act on the approval of it expressed by His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz, and were powerless to revoke what was already past when His Majesty's Vice-Consul's later wishes became known to us, we deprecate Captain Lorimer's representation that this Company has forestalled discussion of the matter with the Khans.

The reports of our engineer show that this inspection was very necessary. He found that there was a large accumulation of debris at one end of the Pul-i-Amarat Bridge, causing a very unequal strain on the suspension cables. He rectified this, painted and repaired the bridge, and left it in good order.

The metalling on the Godar Bridge was in a similar condition—8 inches too thick at the west end and none whatever at the east end. The vibration of the cables caused by the unequal loading was, in his opinion, the cause of a serious crack in the masonry connecting the two piers supporting the cables at the east end of the bridge. He rectified the metalling, painted the bridge, effected all minor repairs, and grouted with cement the fissures in the masonry of the piers.

He did not possess, however, the requisite material to repair the crack in the masonry in a permanent manner. We have submitted his report to the manufacturers of the bridge, who confirm his recommendation that the two piers in question should be tied together by iron bands to prevent the cracks increasing. These iron bands will be forwarded immediately to Ahwaz. They cost little, but the expense of the engineer and workmen required to fix them will be much the same as incurred in previous expeditions.

Meantime we are advising our agent at Ahwaz that they must find means to keep the defective piers under observation and carry out the work without delay, should they find that the cracks are reopening.

We beg that His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz be instructed to notify the Chiefs accordingly.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. N. MACLEAN, Secretary.

[8867]

No. 347.

*Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office.—(Received March 14.)*3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,
March 13, 1908.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to refer to your letter of the 6th November on the subject of the Dizful-Khoremabad route, which my directors have had under consideration.

We note the opinions expressed by Mr. Marling, in view of which Sir Edward Grey has instructed him to take no further action in the matter at present.

It appears to us that any charge against this Company of failure hitherto to exploit its Concession is completely disposed of by the failure of the Persian Government hitherto to maintain order in the region through which the route would pass.

Hostile comment on this Company's alleged reluctance to share its Concession with any one else appears to imply a desire for the construction of the road. If so, the supporters of a motion on this subject in the Assembly would be committing themselves either to pressure on the Government to exercise the necessary authority in these regions, which would be a procedure entirely favourable to British interests, or to attacking this Company as foreign concessionnaires, which does not appear to us a serious danger.

The only proposal before us in this connection was made by the Mouin-el-Tejar, and transmitted to us in your letter of the 24th May, 1907. In our reply of the 18th June we expressed our willingness to co-operate with the Mouin, but fully explained our objections to negotiate on the basis proposed by him. In any case, we should much prefer to wait till there is some reasonable chance that the Mouin will be able to do what he professes. We are ourselves of opinion that when the time comes at which the Persian Government can impose order along the route our Legation will be more likely than the Mouin to be able to influence that Government to activity.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. W. MACLEAN, *Secretary.*

[8916]

No. 348.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 15.)

(No. 59.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Pera, March 15, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

It appears from a private letter that Colonel Surtees has received from Count Gleichen that Colonel Maunsell is about to be sent out to report on the situation, and that he is to travel as a private individual. Considering that he has been Military Attaché here, I think that his travelling as a private individual would not be practicable, and such a mission would involve the risk of misconstruction by the Russian Government and also cause uneasiness here.

There would not appear to be any special need of adding to the information which we already possess, and in these circumstances I think it would be a mistake to send him.

Mr. Wratislaw informs me that there is little change in the disposition of the Turkish troops since last September in the district of which they have taken possession.

[8965]

No. 349.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 32.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 21, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 30 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to report that, according to what I have heard from the German Chargé d'Affaires, the subvention to the German school, amounting in all to 12,000 tomans per annum, is by the Shah's orders made a charge on the customs revenues, and that His Majesty's assent to the arrangement was obtained by the personal efforts of Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom I had some conversation on the 17th instant, admitted that, from a constitutional point of view, the procedure was wholly irregular, if not indeed invalid, as the Assembly had not sanctioned the subvention. At the Council of Ministers at which the question had been discussed he had strongly urged this view, but he had been outvoted, and had been obliged to inform the German Legation in an official note that the subvention would be paid. He pretended that no importance need be attached to this communication, inasmuch as he had, he said, been careful to state that the arrangement was made by the Shah's orders. The Shah's order being unconstitutional would be rejected by the Customs, and His Majesty would never have to pay a shahi himself.

I told his Excellency that I thought the German Legation would give quite another significance to the note.

Sani-ed-Dowleh, the Germanophil Minister of Education, has assured Mr. Churchill that he took much the same line as Mushir-ed-Dowleh, but from other remarks made by Baron von Richthofen I am forced to the conclusion that as much responsibility lies with Sani-ed-Dowleh as with the President of the Assembly. No doubt, too, Mukhber-es-Saltaneh, who, it will be remembered, made such strenuous efforts on behalf of the German Bank Concession last spring, was no less forward in championing the German cause on this occasion.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8966]

No. 350.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 33.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 29 and 31 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a further letter, dated Miandoab, the 29th ultimo, from Dr. Vartanian, Mr. Vice-Consul Stevens' correspondent, giving an interesting and vivid description of the evacuation of Saoujboulak by Firman Firma and the occupation of that town by Mohammed Fazl Pasha's troops. As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 54 of the 24th instant, the Turks left the city on the 22nd February, and were therefore in possession of it for thirty-one days.

Captain Haworth reported on the 5th instant, from Kasr-i-Shirin, that the Governor of that place, Semsam-el-Mamalek, who is also Chief of the Sinjabi tribe, was confident that the Persian tribesmen would give a good account of themselves in a struggle with the Turks, but declared that they would not move except on written orders. Most of the Sinjabis are at present in winter quarters on the Turkish side of the frontier.

The Vali of Pusht-i-Kuh is stated to be at Bedrai with several thousand sowars. He had come thither by forced marches from Dizful, where he had been collecting revenue.

Captain Haworth's reports show that the Turks have sent three guns, eighty mule-loads of ammunition, and detachments of 100 cavalry, 150 cavalry, and 400 infantry (as reported in my telegrams Nos. 37, 38, and 46 of the 5th, 7th, and 17th instant respectively) to Khanikin. On the 5th instant the total Turkish force at that place was from 700 to 800 men, while there are 400 at Bedrai and 400 at Mandali.

I have the honour also to inclose an extract from a private letter from Mr. Consul-General Wratislaw dated the 30th ultimo, which shows that the Persian Commissioner has latterly developed unexpected qualities.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 350.

Dr. Vartanian to Vice-Consul Stevens.

Dear Sir,

Miandoab, January 29, 1908.

YOUR telegram was received by me on Monday last, and I answered it the same day. Here is the report in detail of the Kurdish attack on the city of Saoujboulak, and, later on, how Firman Firma left the city and came to Miandoab.

On Saturday, the 11th January, Firman Firma was expecting the arrival of his household furniture, escorted by some 300 Shahseven horsemen, from Ardebil. The cavalrymen were under the command of Lutfullah Khan Sertip. The caravan was composed of 300 camels and 200 mules (official report). Part of the animals were loaded with the clothing and furniture of Firman Firma, including his cash, worth 12,000 tomans. The rest of the caravan was loaded with grain—barley, flour, rice. It was a week the Kurds were threatening Firman. Bayiz Agha, their leader, had written twice to the Sheikh-ul-Islam that "if the citizens do not expel Firman Firma from the city he (Bayiz Agha) will attack the town." On Saturday, the 11th January, Firman, fearing the Kurds might interfere with the expected caravan, sent out 400 horsemen to meet the said caravan and escort it into the city. Soon after they had left the Kurds appeared on the Khazai hill, all on horseback. They were said to be 8,000 strong, and were made up of several tribes—Mamash, Mankur, Geovrick, Debokri, &c. Bayiz Agha (the Turkish Government has given him the title of Pasha), Bapur Agha, Haji Elkhani, and Pasha Agha (Semsam-es-Sultan, son of the late Kadir Agha, Sojai-il-Mulk), were their leaders. Bayiz Agha is their Chief. The Doshan-Majid mountain, on the east side of Saoujboulak, was being guarded by the Persians; when they saw the enemy they gave the alarm. This was at about 9 A.M., and in a moment the entire city was in an uproar. Thousands of rifles were being fired from both sides (the citizens helping Firman Firma).

The Persian forces were about 900 horsemen and 1,500 infantry. The cavalry were sent out of the city to occupy the surrounding hills. Part of the soldiers were in the barracks, part in the Governor's palace, and part out of the city, facing the Kurds and behind some trees. Firman Firma had brought four cannons with him, and they were all in action—two from his palace yard and two from the tower of the barracks. The Kurds were not in a line; they were all in a lump, like so many ants, firing into the city, but, fearing the Mauser rifles, dared not approach. Soon they organized themselves and divided into two unequal parts. They had two Turkish army officers and a few regular soldiers among them. A force of 5,000 Kurds, under Bayiz Agha, dashed at full speed to the west side of the city, intending to capture the small hill there (they were in the north of the city at first). To do this they had to cross a bridge which was at close range of the guns on the barracks. Two shots were fired from these at the said bridge, but fell 200 yards short of it; the aiming was at fault. The Kurds were hesitating to cross the bridge; they all passed to the west side of the city. Part of the Persian cavalry were ordered to meet them, and they occupied the hill before the Kurds got there. The latter, being much more numerous, dislodged the Persians from the hill. Leaving their horses, the Persians took shelter behind the 4-foot stones of the graveyard close by, and there a fierce but unequal firing took place. This was at about 3 P.M., and the Persians had the disadvantage of the sun shining right in their eyes; but the Kurds, being in the open field and without any shelter, were put to flight. The firing lasted until 8 P.M.

Three thousand Kurds on the Khazai hill were informed by their spies that a caravan was arriving from Miandoab escorted by 3,000 horsemen. The spies had fooled the caravan to perfection; they had represented themselves as being the men of Bapur Agha (Bapur Agha Mangur is on the Persian side, and should not be confused with Hamad Bapur Agha, nor with Bapur Agha of Kum Kaleh, who are both fighting against the Persians). They had told the Persian Sertip that Bapur Agha and Firman Firma had sent them to meet and guide the caravan into the city. The Sertip, having heard of only one Bapur Agha, and that one fighting on the Persian side, had believed the Kurds' spies and placed them in charge of the caravan. In the meantime the 3,000 Kurds divided themselves into three, each 1,000 strong; 1,000 descended the hill and occupied the position on the east side of the main road, 1,000 hid themselves among the woods on the west side of the road by the shore of the river, and 1,000 remained on the hill on guard. The division on the east side of the road had two white flags with them. When the caravan and the Persian cavalry reached the Begzade hill they made a halt, seeing the 2,000 horsemen in front of them. Begzade hill is about one hour's ride from the city; we could see them plainly from the roofs of the houses. At that time two horsemen separated themselves from the Kurds, and, bearing a white flag, went to meet the Persians. The latter, thinking they were friends, did not fire, but they were sure that the 1,000 men on the Begzade hill were of the enemy. When the Persians were within 500 yards of the Kurds the two white-flag bearers separated themselves from the Persians, and, joining their 1,000 comrades, began to fire on them. It was then that the Persians found out they were being led into a trap, but fortunately it was not too late; they at once began to climb the Kurt Kulaghi hill, and, dismounting their tired

horses, took up positions behind the rocks and returned the enemy's fire. The Kurds were commanded by Haji Elkhani and Semsam-es-Sultan (Pasha Agha).

This was at 3 P.M., when a hot battle was going on on the west side of the city between Char Dowleh horsemen and the Kurds, the latter being commanded by Bayiz Agha and the Turkish officers Tewfik Effendi, Mustafa, and Ali Effendi. When the Persians climbed Kurt Kulaghi the caravan was left to its fate; a few dozen Kurds, attacking it, led away all the camels and mules, after killing the camel-drivers and a few soldiers who had no rifles (these were told to go and get their rifles in Saoujboulak). The dead on the Persian side number about fifty, including the camel-drivers, the charvadars, and rifleless soldiers. Among the dead is Vali Mirpenj, the telegraphist of Saoujboulak, who had gone to Miandoab four days ago to direct the repairing of the telegraph line, which had been cut down and the poles stolen.

The Persians reached the city at 8 P.M. (after six hours' fighting) by simply cutting through the enemy's lines—by continuous firing and galloping of their horses at the same time. The dead on the Kurds' side are said to be 200. The Persian commander, Lutfullah Khan Sertip, had exhibited great courage and coolness; after using all his cartridges, he had approached a dead Kurd, taken his rifle, and fought with the dead man's cartridges. He claims to have shot thirty-two Kurds himself.

At about 4 P.M. I went to the "hukmet" (Governor's house). Firman Firma was in the courtyard, deadly pale, but it was not due to fear—it was the paleness of a boundless anger. He had a short Russian Cossack sword hanging from his belt, a line of cartridges, and a Mauser rifle. The Sheikh-ul-Islam was on his right, the Kazi on his left. When he saw me he said, "How are you, Doctor? Are you well?" and at once directed me to look after the wounded. In the evening, when I was leaving the palace, he asked me to stay to supper and sleep in the palace for the night, but I declined, promising to return early in the morning. Firman Firma was directing the firing of the cannon from the courtyard; on the whole he was exhibiting great courage and coolness. To repulse an army of 8,000 Kurds with only 2,400 men is not a small thing. He himself had been awake all night, inspecting the guards and directing at what hour they should be changed.

The reason of this attack on Firman and on the city was Turkish trickery through Ferik Pasha, who played it on Firman Firma. While Firman was still in Miandoab, Ferik Pasha sent him a message. The messenger was Ali Effendi, with twelve mule riders; he was bearing a letter from Ferik to Firman. In that letter Ferik had written to Firman requesting him not to come to Saoujboulak. "And if you do come," he had written, "do not come with too large an army; the people might fear, and the state of affairs might change from bad to worse." Firman did come, but was caught in the Turkish trick, for, listening to Ferik's advice, he did not bring a very large army with him—only 900 horsemen and 1,500 infantry; thence the attack on him and on the city on the 11th January. When Ferik Pasha found out he had succeeded in his trick on Firman he encouraged Bayiz Agha and all the other Chiefs to gather their forces, attack the city, and take Firman a captive. Ferik had made the Aghas believe that Firman had only a few hundred men, and in case of failure he had promised to send regular Turkish soldiers to their help. The attack was made, and failed, but no Turkish army came to their assistance. On the same night, after the battle, Bayiz Agha had gone straight to Pasva, where Ferik Pasha resides. Ferik had promised help for the next day; the next day he extended the time limit to five days. At the end of five days Ferik had said to Bayiz Agha, "Send me 500 camels, including the 300 captured from Persians on the day of the battle, and I will send you cannons, rifles, and ammunition." On the same day Ferik wrote a personal letter to Firman ordering him to leave Saoujboulak, saying, "What right have you got to shoot Turkish soldiers?" Firman answered: "I am not Serdar Mukhtadir that you should scare me out of the city. We have not killed Turkish soldiers; if any were killed on the day of fighting they had no business to be there. Hereafter let your letters be official; I do not care for your personal letters." The camels which had been sent by Kurdish Aghas to Ferik Pasha for the promised arms and ammunition returned without a single rifle; Ferik had no permission from Constantinople. On the day of fighting the Kurds had planted a small flag (Turkish) on a hill which is at rifle range from the Governor's palace.

On Wednesday, the 22nd January, Ferik sent a letter to Firman, saying:—

"The Kurd Aghas attacked the city and fired on you, but now they are sorry for what they have done and wish to come and beg your pardon. You are great, they are your subjects, and it is the duty of the great men to forgive the fault of the small; but the Aghas fear to come to Saoujboulak lest you order them to be shot. I would advise

you to leave the town and make your official residence in Miandoab, from where you may send a Governor for Saoujboulak, and the Kurd Aghas will come there and make it up with you through your Governor, for he will not dare to condemn them to death."

The next day (Thursday) Ferik Pasha himself came to Kusehkeriz, a village which is at about two hours' ride from the city. He had 800 regular Turkish soldiers with him and six guns. When Firman heard Ferik was in Kusehkeriz he sent a dozen prominent citizens to inquire into Ferik's intention in coming on to Persian soil with a Turkish army. Ferik had said to the Committee of citizens that he intended to take the city; that they should expel Firman Firma from the city; and that if they did not do it he (Ferik) would make the city a heap of ruins with his guns. Firman then sent (on the afternoon of the same day) Khodayar Khan, Sertip of Cossacks, to Ferik. Ferik had said to Khodayar Khan the same thing he had told the citizens, adding, "To-morrow is Friday; let Firman get ready and leave the city on Saturday morning." Ferik backed up his threat by having two guns planted on a small hill directly in front of Government House. The citizens, fearing the Turkish guns, begged Ferik Pasha not to fire into the city, promising him to ask Firman to leave, which they did. Firman, seeing he was left without the help of the inhabitants, out of fear, and himself not having enough force to stand the Turkish attack on the city, left on Saturday, the 25th January, and came to Miandoab, bringing all the army with him. Most of the Persian merchants also left the city, including the Customs, the Post Office, and the telegraphist. On Friday, the day before leaving, Firman asked me to come with him as surgeon to the army, and I accepted the position. From Saoujboulak to Miandoab the army was escorted by two mule-riders sent by Ferik Pasha. The Government House was occupied by the Turks before we left Saoujboulak. Ali Effendi, representing Ferik Pasha, arrived in the city on Friday evening and took charge of the palace on Saturday morning, before I had entered into my cab.

At the present time the entire Persian force here is less than 6,000 men. Shahzade Imam Kuli Mirza, former Governor of Urmia, arrived here with 200 horsemen the same day that we arrived (Saturday). Serdar Mukhtadir (Haji Samad Khan), and former Governor of Saoujboulak, left to-day (Thursday) for Maragha. He has been accused of cowardice for leaving Saoujboulak last November before he was threatened or attacked by the Kurds. The state of affairs has been telegraphed to the Shah, but no reply has come to Firman as yet regarding his duty. Judging from the looks of things, Firman Firma intends to give battle if the Turks come to Miandoab. Bread and provisions are cheap here, but in Saoujboulak everything went up to five times its usual price; the lamp oil was raised from 25 krans the pood to 140 krans.

Further news regarding the state of things here will be sent to you if it be asked for. I might add that the condition of things would not be so bad if Serdar Mukhtadir had not left the city, and it would not be as bad if Firman had arrived two weeks earlier.

Yours truly,
(Signed) H. DIRAN MELIK VARTANIAN, M.D.

Inclosure 2 in No. 350.

Consul-General Wratistlaw to Mr. Marling.

(Private.)
(Extract.)

Urmia, January 30, 1908.

MUHTASHEM shows much more capacity and energy than I expected of him. When he came down here he knew absolutely nothing about the history of the frontier question prior to the last three years, but I have coached him a bit, and now he knows, at any rate, more than Taher. He tells me he is convinced that, unless checked meanwhile, the Turks will advance again in the spring, and I am inclined to agree with him. Reed, the solitary British missionary left here, was up at Tergavar last week, and was told by some of the Begzades that they are sick of the Turks and want to come into the Persian fold again.

[8967]

No. 351.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 34.)
Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

A PARSEE gentleman, a brother of Parviz, who was murdered in Shiraz about a year ago, called on me recently and said that the Parsees throughout Persia were in a state of great anxiety. He quoted the recent murder of Fereidoun in Tehran, and the threatening letters which have been sent to a leading member of the community at Shiraz as proof of the insecurity in which they live, and asked if the Legation could not give some publicity to the interest which His Majesty's Government take in their welfare.

After a little discussion I agreed to address a note on the subject to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to request him verbally to cause its contents to be communicated to the Assembly.

When I saw Mushir-ed-Dowleh a few days later, his Excellency informed me that he had already taken that step, and that he had also laid my note, of which a copy is inclosed, before the Shah, as he thought that a hint in that quarter was of more consequence than in the Assembly.

Mr. Grahame has since reported that the local Notables and authorities are bestirring themselves to befriend the Parsees in Shiraz, and he himself has offered the asylum of the Consulate to the merchant who has been the object of threatening letters.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 351.

Mr. Marling to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Your Excellency,

Tehran, February 5, 1908.

MOST disquieting accounts have reached me of late respecting the position of the Parsees throughout Persia, but more particularly in Shiraz and Yezd, and as your Excellency is aware, a leading member of the community was quite recently murdered in Tehran itself.

His Majesty's Government which, I need not remind your Excellency, takes a very warm interest in the welfare of the Zoroastrians, cannot regard this state of affairs without grave concern, and I therefore have the honour to request that your Excellency will cause the necessary steps to be taken to afford proper security and protection to these peaceable and blameless people.

Reports have already been current that unless their existence in Persia is rendered more tolerable by a greater measure of security being assumed to them the Parsees may leave the country. The Imperial Government cannot fail to recognize what a serious loss would be entailed on Persia by the disappearance of an industrial mercantile community such as the Parsees, and will, I feel confident, take every possible measure to restore their confidence in the wish and in the ability of the Imperial authorities to protect them from ignorant or fanatical attack and persecution. For this purpose I venture to think that no more effective step could be taken than the punishment of the persons concerned in the assassination of Fereidoun, some of whom, at all events, I have every reason to believe, are well known to the Imperial Government.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8968]

No. 352.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 35.)
Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 35 of the 17th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of the note which I addressed to the Persian Government informing them, as suggested in my telegram No. 34 of the 28th January, that His

Majesty's Government consider the Persian Government by their prolonged silence to have tacitly accepted the conditions upon which His Majesty's Government assented to the suspension for three years of the payments on account of the sinking fund of the loan of 1903-4.

I am of opinion that our position will be considerably strengthened by this step.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 352.

Mr. Marling to Mushir-ed-Dowleh.

Your Excellency,

Tehran, February 24, 1908.

IT is now about six months since, by his note of the 31st August, 1907, His Majesty's Minister had the honour to inform your Excellency's predecessor of the conditions on which His Majesty's Government were disposed to assent to the request of the Imperial Government for the suspension for three years of the payments on account of the sinking fund of the loan of 1903-4. No reply to that communication has, however, yet been received, nor has the Imperial Government made payment of the amount overdue for sinking fund since the 4th April, 1907.

Under these circumstances I have the honour to inform your Excellency, under the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that His Britannic Majesty's Government consider that, by failing to effect any payment, and notwithstanding the repeated verbal representations which I have had the honour to make on the subject, by neglecting to give any reply to Sir C. Spring-Rice's above-mentioned note, the Persian Government have tacitly accepted the conditions set forth therein.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8969]

No. 353.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 36. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 25 of the 14th February, I have the honour to report that on the 18th instant the Russian Minister asked me whether I was aware that Herr Mengel the correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt" had telegraphed to his paper that during the debate in the Medjliss on M. Mornard's action in connection with the arrival of the Russian Cossacks to reinforce the Consular guards at Tabreez and Ardebil a strong wish had been expressed by a number of Deputies that the Belgian Customs officials should be replaced by Germans. I said I had not heard of it, but I was confident that no such wish had ever been voiced, as I had had two separate and detailed reports of the sitting, neither of which contained a syllable on the subject. M. de Hartwig said he was equally certain on the point and he regarded the message sent by the German correspondent as a mendacious attempt to bring on the tapis the possibility of substituting Germans for the Belgians now employed in the Customs Administration. The Russian Government would never tolerate such a thing and would, he was convinced, go to the length of taking possession of the northern customs themselves to prevent it. He intended to let the Persian Government know in the most unequivocal manner that such a project must not even be entertained; he was about to telegraph to his Government on the subject and hoped I would do the same. I said I would certainly do so and would also give the Minister for Foreign Affairs a strong warning.

The next morning I called on the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires, who told me that he had just received a telegram from his Government asking him what truth there was in the repeated statements appearing in the Belgian press to the effect that the Belgian custom-house employés were about to be summarily dismissed and replaced by the subjects of another Power, and instructing him, should there be any foundation for these reports, to consult with the British and Russian Legations. M. de Warzee went on to observe that these announcements in the Belgian newspapers were

unquestionably based on information sent from German sources, for the German Chargé d'Affaires had informed him only the day before that he had been approached by the Persian Government with an inquiry whether he could not find other officials to replace the Belgians, and Baron von Richthofen had plainly given him to understand that he was recommending the employment of Germans.

I told M. de Warzee that I would take steps at once and that I was sure he would find M. de Hartwig equally ready to assist him.

M. de Warzee begged that his request for the support of the two Legations should be considered as strictly confidential, as the publication of it might create friction between Brussels and Berlin.

It seemed quite possible that by repeating the unscrupulous methods by which he had succeeded in obtaining the subvention for the German school, Baron von Richthofen might succeed in getting a written application from the Persian Government in this case also. I therefore informed you, Sir, of the situation, in case you should wish to take any action at Berlin.

In the afternoon I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs and told him of the facts which had come to my knowledge. His Majesty's Government, I felt sure, would never consent to any arrangement by which the collection of the revenues affected to the service of British loans would be placed in German hands; the present attempt of the German Legation to gain a foothold in the internal affairs of Persia was in contravention of Germany's repeated assurances that she had nothing but commercial aims to pursue in Persia, and would certainly be disavowed in Berlin; why, therefore, were the Persian Government inviting German interference when such invitation could only meet with a refusal and must, moreover, excite the resentment of Great Britain and Russia, whose goodwill it was specially necessary for Persia to conciliate if she wished—as she now did—to raise a foreign loan? Such action seemed to me to be suicidal. In any case what could Persia expect from Germany which would compensate for the loss of the goodwill of her two great neighbours? It could not be financial assistance, for as Herr Gutmann had recently declared publicly, for the present Persia was no place for German investments; nor could it be the settlement of the frontier question, for the late Prime Minister, Naser-ul-Mulk, had been convinced that Germany was egging Turkey on to aggression. Germany was trying to do in Persia what she had successfully done in Turkey, namely, obtain valuable Concessions in exchange for fair promises which she would never fulfil.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh said he was quite alive to the fact that Persia could not afford to alienate the goodwill of Russia and England, and she had no intention of doing so. He could, however, assure me that no application, such as Baron von Richthofen had described to the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires, had been made officially or even, so far as he knew, unofficially; and he would readily promise that so long as he was Minister for Foreign Affairs none would be made. I said that with the evidence before us it was impossible to question that something had passed on which Baron von Richthofen had based his statement, and his Excellency replied that he could not of course answer for what had been said in private conversation, and it was possible that Ehtesham-es-Saltaneh—who was "acting like a madman"—might have made some kind of suggestion. He could at all events confidently assert that there had been no question whatever of removing the Belgian officials.

I then asked Mushir-ed-Dowleh whether he was aware of the intimacy existing between M. Priem and the German Legation and whether it was the fact—as I had heard on excellent authority—that M. Priem, at the request of the German Chargé d'Affaires, prepared a Memorandum for the Minister of Finance intended to show the disadvantages for Persia of seeking a foreign loan in Paris. His Excellency said he knew that M. Priem was constantly at the German Legation, but he knew nothing of the Memorandum; and I went on to urge once more on his Excellency the necessity of settling M. Priem's claims so as to leave him no pretext for remaining in the country. Mushir-ed-Dowleh promised to do his best and on the 26th instant the whole claim was paid.

As regards M. Mornard I think the incident may now be considered as terminated, for, in spite of the wish of the Cabinet that he should be suspended for a fortnight or so, he has, except for two days, been in continuous discharge of his usual duties.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8970]

No. 354.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 37. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

BESIDES being the occasion for the attack on M. Mornard, on which I have reported elsewhere, the introduction of the extra Cossack guards for the Russian Consulates in Azerbaijan has again brought to the surface the latent Persian fear and suspicion of Russia, and the "Habl-ul-Matin" a few days ago published a violent article in connection with this matter, urging the Persian Government to demand the recall of the Russian Minister. M. de Hartwig has thought it necessary to require that some notice should be taken of this journalistic outrage, and a fine is to be inflicted on the Editor.

The excitement aroused by the appearance of this handful of soldiers, with their machine gun, has been very remarkable. The ignorant see in it the prelude of Russian invasion, and the popular resentment is such that the better informed do not dare to explain that it is a mere measure of precaution which the condition of Tabreez and Ardebil, and the inability of the Persian Government to maintain order, amply justify; and Persians of every class comment bitterly on the present anxiety of Russia to protect her officials and subjects on Persian soil as compared with her callous indifference three years ago, when thousands of Persians lost their lives in the Caucasus.

Other incidents have contributed to the present unpopularity of Russia. At least one of the men implicated in the murder of the Parsee banker Fereidoun, and perhaps also the assassin himself, are Russian subjects; and, again, two young Persians, a Seyyid, and a boy of twelve, were killed a few days ago by a Russian Mussulman in self-defence. These persons are, of course, entitled to the protection of the Russian Legation, in accordance with the Treaties in force; and although there is not the smallest reason to believe that M. de Hartwig will act otherwise than correctly, it will be quite impossible to convince public opinion that he is not doing all he can to rescue them from the hands of justice.

From a Persian point of view this exhibition of Russophobia is singularly ill-timed. Even the Assembly has at last come to realize that Persia must seek financial assistance abroad, and that to enable her to obtain it, Russia's consent must be acquired; but neither that body nor the public seems capable of realizing that attacks such as that of the "Habl-ul-Matin" are scarcely calculated to dispose M. de Hartwig to recommend his Government to show excessive generosity when the question of a loan is brought forward.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8971]

No. 355.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 38.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 24 of the 14th February, I have the honour to report that I have received a note from the Persian Government dated the 20th instant, stating that orders have been given to the Director of the Mint to conclude a contract with the Imperial Bank of Persia for the coinage of 500,000 tomans in silver.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8972]

No. 356.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 39.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 28, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the usual monthly summary of events in Persia, including a summary of the proceedings of the National Assembly, for the last four weeks.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure in No. 356.

No. 2.—*Monthly Summary.**Tehran.*

The National Assembly.—The unsatisfactory state of affairs reported in the last summary has not been improved.

On the 6th February the Minister of Commerce and Customs was interpellated on the subject of the entry of another detachment of Russian Cossacks into Azerbaijan, for which the blame was thrown, quite unjustly, on M. Mornard, the Belgian Director of Customs, whose dismissal the House voted (see Mr. Marling's despatch No. 25 of the 14th February).

On the 16th February, the House, after another excited debate, voted for the dismissal of Assef-ed-Dowleh, the Minister of the Interior, on various charges, including that of having permitted Kavam-ul-Mulk to return to Fars without the sanction of the House. The Cabinet is, in consequence, again under reconstruction. Sani-ed-Dowleh has accepted the Finance Ministry, and Nizam-es-Sultaneh is to retain the Premiership with the Ministry of the Interior.

On the 3rd February four new members were elected by the House, a procedure authorized by the election regulations; and on the 9th February four more were elected. The new Deputies replace Tehran members who have either resigned or died, and they include Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek (ex-Minister of War), Motamin-ul-Mulk (brother of Mushir-ed-Dowleh), Hakim-ul-Mulk, Majd-ul-Mulk, Hussein Kuli Khan Nawab, C.B. (brother of Abbas Kuli Khan, head of the Oriental Chancery at His Majesty's Legation), and Amanullah Mirza, an ex-officer of the Cossack Brigade.

Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh still acts as President, and his attack of the 28th January on Seyed Abdullah was not followed by any trouble, the Mujtehed preferring to treat the matter with contempt. The President's activity in support of German educational proposals has caused much adverse comment. He used his influence in favour of an acceptance of the German proposal to greatly enlarge their present school, the Persian Government paying 12,000 tomans a year towards it, and the Foreign Minister has officially informed the German Legation of the Government's acceptance, though the National Assembly has not been given a chance of discussing the matter.

On the 22nd and 23rd February the House again discussed financial matters, which had been shelved for several months. The old ground was gone over with regard to the "Internal Loan" and "National Bank."

On the 25th February an Imperial rescript was read informing the House of the evacuation of Soujboulak by the Turkish troops. Musteshar-ed-Dowleh (Tabreez) made a long speech expressing the great satisfaction of the House for this satisfactory result of the negotiations. He said that their thanks were due to His Majesty the Shah, to the Foreign Minister, and to the foreign Governments who had given Persia their diplomatic support in this matter.

On the 27th February another Imperial rescript was brought to the House by the Minister of the Court (Assef-i-Afkham, formerly Vizier Afkham), thanking the Deputies for the good work they had done and especially for the termination of the Press Bill. His Majesty extolled the National Assembly for their zeal in the public interest, and hoped they would continue their good work.

There is still a feeling of anxiety as to what step the Shah and his reactionary entourage will take next. Rumours are current of another impending *coup d'état*, but the past four weeks have on the whole been comparatively quiet. Saad-ed-Dowleh is still at the Dutch Legation.

The Press.—Violently anti-dynastic and even revolutionary articles continue to appear in the Tehran press. One paper extolled the assassins of the King and Crown Prince of Portugal. Another paper publishes weekly "tirades" on the Kajars, and the "Habl-ul-Matin" attacked the Russian Minister so violently on the 9th February in connection with the entry of another detachment of Cossacks into Azerbaijan that the matter has been taken up diplomatically. The "Medjliss" newspaper has published a number of articles on the subject of the Anglo-Russian Convention, and the "Habl-ul-Matin" has lately published a translation of an article by Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge, on the same subject.

The "Enjumens," or Political Societies.—A list of 100 "Enjumens" has been

supplied to the Legation, of which the "Enjumen Azerbaijan" (President, Taki Zadeh, with 2,962 members) is the most important. These political societies continue to play a prominent political part.

General News.—Nizam-es-Sultaneh's only son, Hussein Khan, died on the 22nd instant, aged about 25 years, after a long and painful illness.

The Bakhtiari Khans have disavowed the language of their three representatives who called at the Legation in November last (see Mr. Marling's despatch No. 257 of the 30th November, 1907). Mr. Churchill had an interview with Shuja-es-Sultan and Bahadur-ed-Dowle on the subject on the 14th February.

The Tehran Municipality is being reorganized by Prince Kashef-es-Sultaneh, who was educated in France and was for a time Persian Representative at Bombay. He has started a census and has begun to name the streets and number the houses. He proposes to institute a tax on houses, carriages, horses, &c. A number of the streets of Tehran are now lit by electricity.

On the 22nd February an incident occurred which might easily have developed serious consequences for the Russian Legation owing to its extreme unpopularity. A Russian subject (a Mussulman Caucasian), who had married a Persian woman of bad repute, found his house surrounded by an angry mob, and in his endeavour to escape killed two people and wounded others, and eventually took refuge at the Russian Legation, where he was followed by the mob. The gates of the Russian Legation were closed, and a demonstration was averted with some difficulty. The trial is now proceeding at the Persian Foreign Office.

The month of "Moharrem," which began on the 4th February, has so far passed quietly. The anniversary of the death of Imam Hussein was observed in the usual manner, and apart from an accidental panic at the Shah's "Tazieh," or religious theatre, which resulted in considerable loss of life, no incident occurred.

The Turkish Ambassador, Chemsuddin Bey, left Tehran on the 21st February, and has been replaced by Remsi Bey as Chargé d'Affaires.

The new German Minister, Count Quadt, arrived at Tehran on the 23rd February.

Kaim Makam, the unsatisfactory Minister of Commerce and Customs, will probably be dismissed owing to a ludicrous incident which occurred a few days ago. A parcel of detonators for bombs arrived at Enzeli and was seized by the Customs. Kaim Makam ordered the Customs to send the parcel to Tehran to be opened in the presence of the Shah. It arrived at the Palace a few days ago, but on being opened was discovered to contain nothing but paper.

(Signed) G. P. CHURCHILL,
Oriental Secretary.

February 28, 1908.

Tabreez.

1. The twenty-five Russian Cossacks who arrived on the 2nd January to reinforce the Consular Guard brought a machine gun with them.

2. On the 22nd January news was received that a Turkish General, with 1,200 Turkish troops, six guns, and 3,000 Kurds, had entered Soujboulak, from which place the Persian Governor-General and troops had withdrawn to Miandoab. The Kurds were stated to have been dismissed two days later. On the 22nd February the Turks were reported to have evacuated Soujboulak, and the Persians were intending to resume occupation of it.

Asterabad.

The Governor has received the following reinforcements: 100 Timuri horse-men, 200 Kurdish horsemen, and the Semnan regiment. He has recovered fifty-four captives from the Turkomans. The local Assembly having directed him not to move his camp to Ak Kalleh until all the plundered property had been recovered, the Governor requested the National Assembly to send him more troops or to direct the local Assembly not to interfere with him.

Resht.

1. Two more Ghilan representatives for the National Assembly have been elected. This completes the number allotted, namely, six. Local Councils are being elected in each quarter of the town of Resht.

2. On the 4th February Amir Azam was recalled from the Governorship of Ghilan. He began well, but had latterly left the whole administration in the hands of a corrupt subordinate, Mohtashem-ed-Dowleh; hence his recall.

3. The Russian Government, having issued regulations that bounties would only be paid on goods shipped in the steamers of the Caucas and Mercury Steam-ship Company, a boycott of these steamers was started by the people of Enzeli, which led to the withdrawal of the regulation.

4. On the 5th February the Deputy Governor of Kasma was assassinated at that place. Up to the 15th February the assassins had not been captured. The murder has created a panic among other Governors of districts. In Fumen no landowner now dares to visit his properties.

5. Moez-es-Sultan, formerly employed in the Customs, recently inspected the Tehran-Enzeli road with a view to terminating the contract with Messrs. Bagheroff Brothers, which has now only eight months to run.

Meshed.

1. It is reported that much wheat is being exported to Transcaspia from the border districts. So far the price at Meshed has not been affected.

2. Meshed continues quiet. Interest has centred in the municipal elections, which were controlled by the popular party. Certain reactionary priests united to suppress the movement, but found open opposition useless. The leading priest in Meshed, from fear of the consequences, supported the popular party.

3. The following is a translation of a letter from Serdar Nasrullah Khan to the head of the Turkish Mission to Cabul, which was received from Herat:—

"To Hussein Hussein Beg.

"Your Petition of the 13th Jemadi-us-sani (the 24th July) has reached me by the hand of your man Mahmoud Beg. You asked for 300*l.* for road expenses, but I out of kindness have sent you 350*l.* through my agent Mohammed Osman at Kurrachee. Please give assurances to your Government on my behalf, and come to Cabul via Merv and Herat. The Governor of Herat will spare no pains to show you every mark of respect and hospitality until your arrival at Cabul. Please give my compliments to your companions, Mohammed Fazl, Saad-ud-Din, Mohammed Mustafa, and Reza Beg, and send your books to Cabul via Kurrachee."

So far as is known, Hussein Hussein Beg is a Kaïmakam, and Mohammed Fazl a Captain in the Turkish army. Saad-ud-Din is a doctor, and Mohammed Mustafa is his assistant. Mohammed Reza Beg is a mechanic. They are all servants of the Turkish Government, and have been granted two years' leave. It is stated that they are natives of Cairo.

4. Motamid-es-Sultaneh, son of the late Kavam-ed-Dowleh, has been appointed Vizier to the Governor-General of Khorassan.

Turbat-i-Hayderi.

1. Three Russian Cossacks from Seistan and four from Karez passed through during the last week in January on their way to Russia. Six for Turbat, four for Seistan, and four for Kerman arrived during the following week.

2. Timour Khan, mentioned in the last summary as a leader of robbers, reverted to his occupation as road guard as the result of action taken by the Governor-General. About the 15th January a caravan of 700 camels started under his protection.

3. On the 9th February three sowars of the Consular escort were assaulted in the town by Persians. They brought two of their assailants to the Consulate, and soon after a large crowd assembled and an attempt was made to get into the Consulate, but was repelled. As the crowd did not disperse Captain Keyes sent word to Sheikh Ali Akber, the leading priest of Turbat, requesting him to discourage anti-Sunni feeling, to which the assault was due. The latter replied that as the British were well-wishers of Persia he would secure the punishment of any one Captain Keyes thought guilty. Captain Keyes was unable to identify any of the assailants of the Consulate, but sent the names of three men who had urged on the crowd. The Governor and local Assembly gave orders for the arrest of these men. Captain Keyes was holding an inquiry into the cause of the riot in the presence of the Governor and representatives of the local Assembly.

Ispahan.

1. On the 15th February the Governor resigned and left for Tehran.
2. The Russian Consul-General's Cossack guard has been raised to twenty-five men.
3. Bahram Mirza, son of Zil-es-Sultan, who has been appointed Governor of Sultanabad, arrived at Ispahan on the 9th February on his way to his post.

Yezd.

On the 20th February a telegram was received reporting that the post to Yezd had been robbed at Nogunbuz. It appears that the robbers also carried off the post-horses of three stages, Nain, Nogunbuz, Chahinoh, also six men and forty-two donkeys from a caravan which had halted on the way. The post from Yezd was robbed on the 17th February at Chahinoh, the driver shot, and the rifles and cartridges of three guards with him taken, also four post-horses belonging to Akda. Four stages were thus denuded of horses and the postal service disorganized.

Kashan.

On the 14th February the Governor, with 50 sowars from Tehran and 200 Kashis, attempted to force the position of Naib Hussein at Dowg. The latter was reported to have routed them single-handed. On the 16th February the Governor arrested some thieves, and secured several thousand tomans worth of stolen property, which was supposed to have been looted by Naib Hussein. A party of roughs attacked the Governor's house and released the prisoners. Fighting continued, and the Governor was said to be leaving for Tehran, the people having gone over to the side of Naib Hussein. The Persian Government has since informed His Majesty's Legation that Naib Hussein and his party are on their way to Tehran to take refuge at the British Legation, but on arriving at Kum they took sanctuary in the mosque.

Seistan.

1. The Russian Vice-Consul informed Major Kennion that he had received from his Minister a similar telegram to the one sent by Mr. Marling, on the subject of the joint action taken by the British and Russian Legations in Tehran. He added that, "as it was the policy of both Governments to support the Shah," the Russians were preparing for a demonstration on the Azerbaijan frontier, if this should appear necessary in his interests.

2. The man sent to see the new canal dug by the Afghans at Burjiab reported that it was finished. The canal takes the whole of the water of the stream and leaves none for Deh Dost Mohammed and adjacent Seistan villages. The Headman of Deh Dost Mohammed began digging another canal, taking off 100 yards or so higher up, to divert the water to the Seistan side, but the Afghans stopped him.

3. The Cossack escort of the Russian Consulate remains at its former strength of thirty.

4. Captain Hunter, I.M.S., Medical Officer for Seistan, arrived on the 4th January.

5. M. Mornard, on his return from Kuh-i-Malik-Siah, told Major Kennion he had started the caravanserai and hoped that six rooms would be finished shortly, the remainder in the spring. He agreed that two more caravanserais were required on the road.

6. The local Assembly at Birjand is said to be entirely under the influence of Shaikat-ul-Mulk.

7. Major Kennion having telegraphed asking if a report was true that Heshmet-ul-Mulk was about to leave Tehran for Seistan as Governor, Abbas Kuli Khan interviewed the Minister of the Interior, who said that the Heshmet was trying to get the Governorship of Kain, but the Persian Government would not give it to him.

8. The Karguzar has been sending alarmist telegrams to Tehran reporting the concentration of Afghan troops on the frontier. There seems to be no foundation for these reports.

9. The embargo against the export of grain was withdrawn on the 24th January. This is not likely to have any good effect as long as the export duty and passport tax remain unreduced.

10. The Persian post which left Seistan for Meshed on the 21st February was

stolen between Nusretabad and Baring. A sowar with it was killed, and 1,000 tomans, the property of the Imperial Bank of Persia, were stolen. The correspondence bags were subsequently recovered.

Kerman.

1. A band of 150 robbers has established itself at Shams, on the Yezd road, and has already taken over 2,000 sheep from the surrounding villages.

2. Herr Kurt Jung, German Commercial Agent, arrived on the 12th January from Yezd.

3. Some 200 sowars and infantry looted the district round Rafsinjan about the middle of January. They subsequently moved off towards Bardsir and Mashig.

4. Ala-ul-Mulk has been appointed Governor-General of Kerman. Telegraphing on the 20th February, His Majesty's Consul stated that the people had telegraphed to Ala-ul-Mulk advising him to turn back. Major Ducat was of opinion that his coming without an adequate force would probably end in his expulsion.

Kermanshah.

1. Captain Haworth, with Captain Crossle, I.M.S., arrived at Kasr-i-Shirin early in February. Zahir-ul-Mulk, Acting Governor of Kermanshah, with 200 men of the Zengeneh regiment and 16 artillerymen with one mule gun, arrived there a few days later.

2. Between Serpul and Kasr-i-Shirin Captain Haworth met M. Develle, of the Customs, who has returned to Kermanshah on relief by M. Cattersell. He was accompanied by M. Pujan, a French Chilian travelling for a Frankfort firm in chemical indigo. Dr. Grothe, who visited Kermanshah last autumn, was much interested in chemical indigo, and also came from Frankfort.

3. M. Cattersell insisted on Captain Haworth and Captain Crossle putting up at his house at Kasr-i-Shirin, and behaved most kindly to them. This is a great contrast to his behaviour towards British officials, &c., when at Bunder Abbas and Kerman.

4. A later report states that the German Agent mentioned in paragraph 2 (Kerman) has appointed an agent at Kermanshah, who is to travel for him. He offered to get this man the agency of five other German firms.

Shiraz.

1. It is stated that a large house and garden, which have been bought by a Russian merchant, are intended for the Consulate-General the Russian Government is said to contemplate establishing here.

2. On the 16th and 17th January a fall of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rain caused a flood, which did considerable damage to the town, as well as to the Residency and Telegraph gardens. The major part of the west wall of the Telegraph garden was swept away, and also a large part of the east wall. About 150 yards of the west and east walls of the Residency garden were carried away, and about 100 yards more so undermined that they will probably have to be rebuilt. Six caravanserais, 200 shops, and over 600 houses, chiefly near the town wall, were ruined. Five persons were killed, Persian reports of a larger number of casualties not being confirmed. The Kavam's sons and others offered His Majesty's Consul and the Telegraph employés various gardens to move to. The local authorities opened a subscription list for the victims of the flood; 3,500 tomans were promised. Subscriptions were also received from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, the Imperial Bank of Persia, and the Russian Legation. About 140 families were homeless, for whom it is proposed to erect houses.

On the 28th January a further fall of rain caused the Residency and Telegraph gardens to be again flooded, but no damage was done to buildings.

3. Sahib Ekhtiar, the new Governor of Fars, arrived at Shiraz on the 8th February.

4. A feud between the Headmen of Konartakhte and Daliki culminated in fighting on the Bushire road between those two places from the 23rd January to the 27th. On the 21st January it was reported that the up post from Bushire had been robbed at Pul-i-Daliki, and from that date until the middle of February no post got through to Shiraz. Mr. Grahame made representations to the Governor-General, and His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to the Persian Government.

The Ispahan road also continues disturbed.

5. A leading Parsee merchant in Shiraz having received threatening letters,

representations were made by His Majesty's Legation to the Persian Government, with the result that orders for the protection of Parsees there were telegraphed to the Foreign Office Agent.

6. Several cases having occurred of stones being thrown at Europeans, the Governor-General, on Mr. Grahame's referring the matter to him, promised that this form of annoyance should be put a stop to.

PERSIAN GULF.

Bushire.

1. The Lingah Agent reports that the news of the capture of the Humaidi pirates by the British authorities, brought down the Gulf by native craft from Bunder Rig, caused general satisfaction. * In Bushire there has been open rejoicing in the coffee-shops frequented by the seafaring classes.

2. The local Assembly met on the 8th January for the election of a representative for the National Assembly, but without result.

3. The districts of Dashti and Dashtistan have been separated from the province of Fars and are farmed out to the Governor of the Gulf Ports.

Bunder Abbas.

1. The Russian merchant-ship "Tigre" arrived on the 21st December from Bushire and left next day. M. Belayew, assistant to the Russian Consul, left by her for Odessa on eight months' leave.

2. M. Wagner, formerly Director of Customs here, arrived on the 28th December. He had been appointed Director-General at Bushire, but seemed unwilling to undertake the responsibilities of that post. During his stay he called on His Majesty's Consul, with whom his relations have always been most cordial.

3. The caravan trade, which had been entirely suspended for six weeks, owing to the disturbed state of the country, was resumed at the end of December. Caravans arrived from Kerman and Lar. The Kerman caravans came by the Jiruft-Bam route, the Baft-Dowletabad road being still unsafe.

Lingah.

1. A German named Boustaff arrived at the end of December by the steam-ship "Sicilia" to join the firm of Wonekhaus.

2. The Lingah Agent reported that Hajji Hassan Samaiyeh was prostrate from illness and had intrusted the care of his interests in the Oxide Concession to M. Wonekhaus.

Mohammerah.

Moin-et-Tujjar has appointed his nephew Nazim-ut-Tujjar his agent at Naseri. This man was suspected of inciting an attack on the Residency stables at Bushire some years ago.

(Signed) C. B. STOKES, Major,
Military Attaché.

Supplement to Monthly Summary No. 2 of February 28, 1908.

Attempt on the Shah's Life, February 28, 1908.

The Shah, who had not been out of the Palace since he paid his State visit to the National Assembly on the 12th November last, was proceeding at 3 p.m. to his country seat at Dochantapeh when a determined attempt was made on his life.

The procession was formed of a motor-car in front and a carriage behind, with the usual escort of horsemen and running footmen. A little way past the house of the Manager of the Imperial Bank, and before reaching that of the Zil-es-Sultan, a fusillade was opened on the motor-car, in which it was supposed the Shah rode, by some persons from the adjoining roofs, who evidently could not see into the vehicles

from their elevated position. Two bombs were then thrown at the motor-car completely shattering it, and killing two persons and wounding about seven others. The Shah, who was seated in the carriage behind the motor-car, immediately emerged and took refuge in an adjoining house. Great confusion of course immediately ensued, and His Majesty returned to the Palace on foot in safety.

Dr. Lindley, who saw His Majesty, found him in a very agitated condition. The courtiers were all offering their congratulations.

His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires deputed Abbas Kuli Khan to offer his congratulations to the Shah on his miraculous escape.

(Initialled) G. P. C.

[8974]

No. 357.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 41.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 26, 1908.

THE month of Moharrem is practically over, and, contrary to general anticipations, there has been no sort of disturbance. There has, however, been far less religious enthusiasm than usual, and this was especially noticeable in the small numbers and the lack of fervour of those who took part in the ceremonies of the "Ashura," the tenth day of the month.

The long expected reconstruction of the Ministry commenced on the 20th instant, when Assaf-ed-Dowleh was dismissed by a vote of the Assembly, nominally for having permitted Kavam-ul-Mulk to return to Shiraz against the known wishes of the Fars Deputies; the real reason being that the Medjliss, though determined to bring about a change in the Cabinet, were afraid to make a clean sweep all at once, and selected the Minister of the Interior to begin with. His portfolio has been taken over by Nisam-es-Sultaneh, who vacates the Ministry of Finance. Though these changes are probably not final, they are not unsatisfactory so far as they go. Sani-ed-Dowleh is certainly more satisfactory as a Finance Minister than Nisam-es-Sultaneh. The latter was accepted as Prime Minister by the Parliament in the hope that, with his great experience and knowledge of the country, he would be able to restore some degree of order; but he has never enjoyed the real confidence of the Constitutional party, as he is essentially a statesman of the old school which looks on office as a means of making money. It was probably for this reason that he selected the Ministry of Finance, and now, finding an empty treasury, he is quite ready to migrate to the Home Office, for which his talents are better adapted and where some pickings may still be discovered. It is very probable that he will shortly retire altogether from public life.

Sani-ed-Dowleh, who succeeds him in the Ministry of Finance, was the first President of the Assembly. He spent some years in an engineering house in Germany and his sympathies are strongly German. His knowledge of finance is meagre, but on the whole he is probably less incompetent for his present post than any other possible candidate. His worst failing is a fondness for devising unsound commercial and industrial schemes; but he has comparatively liberal ideas, and it may be hoped that M. Bizot will find him manageable.

A report of a further change, viz., the dismissal of Kayam Makam by the Shah, has just reached me.

During the past month the Shah has abstained from overt interference in the affairs of the country; but circumstantial rumours are current that he is preparing for another *coup d'état*, the chief foundation for which appears to be a report that he is importing a quantity of rifles via Mohammerah, and that his retainers from Veramin are again being organized into some semblance of a fighting force. The political Societies are very suspicious of some move on His Majesty's part and are watching him very carefully.

The popular dissatisfaction with the Assembly is gaining strength, and in order to meet the general demand for an improvement in its composition, a number of vacancies caused by death or resignations have been filled by new Members selected by the Assembly itself. The public proceedings of the House on the other hand tend to become more and more formal, and all real business is conducted either in secret sittings or in the private meetings of the various Committees of the House. The system is pernicious, as it gives greater facilities to powerful Deputies to work in their own personal interests, and it is one of the causes of the growing discontent with the Medjliss. It is, however, likely to receive further extension by the creation of a

Medjliss club, a proposal made by Ehteshem-es-Sultaneh, who apparently in despair of getting any practical results from the Assembly itself, believes that the only remedy is to transfer its functions to a private and irresponsible caucus.

The general summary for the month shows that there is no real improvement in the condition of the provinces. Shiraz remains relatively quiet. The arrival of the new Governor, Sahib Ikhtiar (Vazir Makhisous), has passed off quietly enough; but it remains to be seen what will be the result of the appearance of Kavam-ul-Mulk, to whose return the Governor agreed, in spite of the known wishes of the Fars Deputies. I myself strongly opposed the proposed return of this powerful but intriguing Chief last autumn; but as his detention in Tehran did not seem to conduce, as the Persian Government themselves anticipated, to the restoration of order in Fars, I contented myself on the present occasion with conveying to him a strong warning that the renewal of disturbance will be the signal for a demand for his recall. The government of the province will virtually be in his hands, as he has accepted the task of collecting the "mallyat," a duty which may, Mr. Grahame anticipates, create difficulties between him and the Governor, and Sahib Ikhtiar, who is not a strong man, is already somewhat apprehensive.

Hashmat-ul-Mulk, the Governor of Seistan, has been trying by means of bribery to obtain permission to return to Seistan, as his only object is to gain the Governorship of Kain, which is now satisfactorily administered by Shaukat-ul-Mulk, and his return to Seistan could only lead to disorders. I have obtained verbal assurances from Mushir ed-Dowleh that he will be detained here.

Yezd and Mashan have been practically in the hands of the mob; Isfahan is added to the list of provinces without a Governor; and Kerman has sent a message to its Governor-designate that he will be well advised to stay away.

Caravan traffic between Bushire and Shiraz is at a standstill, no post having succeeded in passing since the 14th January; and an equally serious state of affairs prevails on the Tehran-Yezd road, on which communications are cut by the presence of a strong band of brigands at Nain. In the east there has been a somewhat serious robbery of the post between Nasratabad and Birjand.

Mushir ed-Dowleh has also informed me that there has been a serious disturbance in the neighbourhood of Khorremabad and that the local Governor is practically besieged by Lur tribesmen at Kila-el-Aflak.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8975]

No. 358.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 42. Confidential.)

Sir,

Tehran, February 28, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you the accompanying copies of correspondence, received through His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire, including an excellent and exhaustive Report by His Majesty's Consul at Kermanshah on the possibility of opening up regular communications between Mohammerah and Kermanshah via Ahwaz, Dizful, and Pusht-i-Kuh.

The scheme put forward by Captain Haworth would, if put into execution, undoubtedly prove to be of considerable value to British trade, and is in all probability the best, and least impracticable, alternative to the direct Luristan route through Dizful, Khurramabad, and Burujird for which the Persian Transport Company hold the Concession.

Until Captain Haworth has himself been able to travel over the route in question and obtain first-hand information in regard to its possibilities, I feel some diffidence in making any observations on the subject.

In general I have little to add to the remarks, in which I entirely concur, made in Major Cox' covering despatch to the Government of India, of the 29th December last (inclosed herewith), but I venture to point out that Pusht-i-Kuh, thanks to the character of its ruler, enjoys a measure of order and tranquillity somewhat unusual in modern Persia, and that should the Wali be interested in the project his support will be a reasonably satisfactory guarantee for the peace of such part of the road as lies in his dominions. The road, however, passing underneath the western slopes of the Pusht-i-Kuh Mountains, would be unpleasantly near the undefined frontier, the vicinity of

which has for many years been a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground, preyed upon by nomad tribes, whose conveniently indeterminate nationality make it impossible—as was shown in the case of the attacks on the "Shushan"—to fix the responsibility for their misdeeds on either the Ottoman or the Persian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 358.

Consul Haworth to Major Cox.

(No. 29.)

(Telegraphic.)

Kermanshah, October 10, 1907.

UNDER new Treaty if right to Concession for Bagdad road is purchased by the Russians they can destroy our large trade in Manchester and other goods by rebates on tolls to Russian firms. Scheme for the Concession of the Pusht-i-Kuh road is being forwarded by me through Bushire. We should be helpless if this Concession were given to Russia. Route will supersede the Bagdad route, which entails transit duty, Turkish illegal charges and heavy agency fees. Lynch charges 5 per cent. Kermanshah is 28 marches from Mohammerah, while via Bagdad takes [?] months.

Rough estimate of the expense is as follows:—

Fourteen caravanserais at 9,000 rupees each.

Two water reservoirs at 2,000 rupees each.

Improvement of track for mule transport 10,000 rupees (for details of route see Burton's Report).

Allow 20,000 rupees for unforeseen expenses.

Total 1,60,000 rupees.

Caravanserais would be reproductive works farmed out. Suggest royalties to Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh for guarding the road to two marches from Dizful, whence arrangements would have to be made by the Consul at Ahwaz. I could arrange to have grain and supplies for caravanserais. I consider I could make scheme an absolute success and that it would revolutionize trade with Persia. As a defensive measure, would include in Concession Khurramabad road as far as Khurramabad. My proposals include other idea as to agency, &c.

If Government are not anxious to take up the scheme personally, I can get a concessionnaire who is a British subject, who would be willing to do so on a loan from Government by instalments as required, with buildings as erected as security, and leaving organization and supervision in my hands. The Imperial Bank of Persia accept the same terms, but I consider it to be important that the organization should remain with me.

Inclosure 2 in No. 358.

Consul Haworth to Major Cox.

(No. 55.)

Sir,

Kermanshah, October 22, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to address you with reference to the subject of the improvement of the prospect of British trade in the district fed from the towns of Kermanshah and Hamadan.

The former town supplies Burujird, Senna, and the Pusht-i-Kuh country; the latter Senna, Sultanabad, Doulutabad, Nehawend, and in certain classes of goods, notably Manchester goods, Tabreez and Tehran.

Under the new Treaty practically the whole of this country is earmarked to the Russians for purposes of Concession. We have, however, a large trade already existing in the districts I have named, and the imports of Manchester goods alone form one of the largest entries in the Kermanshah customs returns, while this year's exports of that class of goods from Hamadan to Tabreez have, notwithstanding bounties, exceeded previous years.

There is no question that it is not intended, under the Treaty, that we should surrender this large trade into Russian hands, at the same time under circumstances which it rests with the Russians to produce, there is, equally, little doubt that but a small portion, if any, of this trade will remain to us unless we take measures to preserve it.

The present route by which all this trade enters Persia is via Bagdad to Kermanshah and Hamadan, whence as noted it is distributed.

I understand that for the next two years the Concession for this road lies with a Persian, who, up to the present, has taken no action on his rights. It matters little if this be correct or not, for it would be easy for the Russians or any other foreign Power to purchase the right if they did not propose to wait the two years for its expiry.

With the road a Russian Concession, and with the very complete system of bounties followed by that country, competition would soon be made impossible.

The toll on mules on the Kazwin-Hamadan road is 4 krans per head, with a similar charge, and a reasonable rebate to Russian firms, but few loads would be imported through British agents. Thus once the open door were passed its advantages would cease, and I think it will be admitted that once the importing agents were Russian firms, Russian goods would gradually oust the British articles which has hitherto been able to compete against the bounty system when applied without other aids and advantages.

It is inconceivable that the Russians will not cast an eye on such a profitable business, and it follows that where they produce similar goods they will attempt to monopolize the trade, and in other cases they will act as they have in the case of tea, and will take care that all goods so imported come through Russian middlemen.

It remains then to us to see what steps we can take, not only to protect the trade which exists, but to exploit the large market which still remains untouched, and which, as I have mentioned in my diaries, could easily be gained. (In this reference I would point to the samples which I obtained from the Cawnpore Woollen Mills, and which resulted in an immediate order for close on 1,000L. worth of goods.)

I have been dissatisfied with the Bagdad route since first I came to Kermanshah. Its disadvantages are numerous; traffic is dependent on the few steamers which are allowed to ply on the river, and consequently goods are detained for long periods at Bussorah. There are Turkish transit charges to be paid, amounting to 1 per cent.; constant illegal charges, varying from 1 to 3 per cent.; and, lastly, heavy agency charges. I may quote Messrs. Lynch, whose charges are 5 per cent. under this head alone.

If any other route could be found which would obviate these difficulties the whole Persian traffic would very soon be deflected to that route.

Two such routes exist—one partly, one wholly—without the sphere which is open to British initiative.

The first, the Mohammerah-Ahwaz-Kurramabad-Hamadan route, is open to us as far as somewhere near above Khurramabad. It is open to the Russians throughout its length. The present history of Persia does not lead one to imagine that this route will be feasible for some years to come, and for the immediate present we have little interest in it except as a defensive measure.

The second route is open to us in its entirety; at any rate to within a mile or so of Kermanshah, and it is to this route that I draw attention.

I attach herewith a précis made from Burton's Reports on this road, together with what I consider necessary to make the road practicable as a mule road.

Major Burton makes in all thirteen stages from Dehbala, in Pusht-i-Kuh, to Dizful. In my original and telegraphed estimate I adhered to these stages, making—

5 stages from Kermanshah to Dehbala.
13 " " Dehbala to Dizful.
10 " " Dizful to Mohammerah.

On reference to the précis, however, it will be seen that many of the distances are small, 11 to 14 miles, or little more than half a charwardar's ordinary march.

I have accordingly cut down the thirteen stages to ten stages. These also are not arbitrary, and should the scheme be approved it would be necessary to travel over the road, and, after careful examination, to decide definitely where caravanserais would be required.

I merely take Major Burton's Report as a statement of what can in actuality be found, in case it is not possible to improve upon it. The distances, however, are very unequal, and there is little doubt from the general tenor of his Report that the marches could be more equalized.

(The total distance from Dehbala to Dizful is estimated at 184 miles, which would give ten average marches of 18.4 miles each.)

I have no copy of Major Baird's Report, but I discussed the matter with him, and his opinions were in accord with the possibility of the scheme.

My original information, and Captain Gough's tour, showed five marches to Pusht-i-Kuh, i.e., Dehbala. Shawal Levi, a Jew and a British subject, in whose hands lies the entire Pusht-i-Kuh trade, tells me that only three marches need be allowed; it would be safer to put it at four marches.

Thus the revised distance would be—

	Stages.
Kermanshah to Dehbala	4
Dehbala to Dizful	10
Dizful to Ahwaz	6
Ahwaz to Mohammerah	4
Total	24

It will then be necessary to allow thirteen caravanserais between Kermanshah and Dizful. I have allowed one extra caravanserai as a safeguard.

I have calculated at the rate of 3,000 tomans per caravanserai, equal, at the present rate of exchange, to 9,000 rupees.

It is certain that one water reservoir will be required at Khushkadul; I have allowed for a second, at a price of 2,000 rupees each.

I have allowed 10,000 rupees for mending the road. At only five of the stages would repairs be necessary. In Persia, also, the muleteer is not exacting, as any one who has seen the main arteries of the country will admit.

Burton mentions that bridges would be required for various irrigation channels between the Karkhah and Dizful. The common system in Persia is to lay down half-a-dozen poplar trees side by side; to cover these with brushwood, and then to ram the whole lot down with earth, thus at a trifling cost a bridge is made which answers all the purposes required, even on the post carriage road to Sultanabad the bridges across the irrigation channels are made as above.

At the Karkhah it might be necessary to have a ferry, but there is no reason why this should be an expensive business. A flying or swinging bridge, of the pattern shown in the "Military Book of Fortification," would answer the purpose admirably at a small cost. A modification of this system is in daily use in Kermanshah, across the Karasu, when the river is unfordable. The pontoon of this bridge will carry four horses at a time. For the route all that would be needed would be two such pontoons to carry ten mules each.

I have allowed 20,000 rupees for contingencies or unforeseen expenditure; thus the total estimated cost is 1,60,000 rupees. It stands to reason that an estimate made without travelling the road must be extremely rough, but with the exception of the repairs to the road the items are taken from average costs of such works, while under "contingencies" I have allowed a large sum.

The road being complete, there rest the two important points of supplies and guarding.

In my précis I have shown that at every stage but one supplies are obtainable within easy distance at the proper period of the year; the only question lies in storing them. I have been obliged to take the Jew, Shawal Levi, into my confidence. He informs me that he would take over the contract for supplies, and adds that he knows that the Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh, with whom he is in constant touch, would be only too glad to join him in the matter.

There remains the question of guarding. The Wali's territory extends to the Jhikao, two marches from Dizful. I would recommend a royalty per mule to the Wali for guarding the route as far as it lay in his district.

Shawal Levi, again, informs me that he knows that the Wali would welcome the project, and would undertake the guarding of the road so far as it lay within his dominions. The Wali is supposed to be pro-English.

The Jhikao is but two marches from Dizful, and from thence the Vice-Consul at Ahwaz could no doubt arrange matters on a similar understanding. I note that in the latest diaries it is stated that goods have reached Dizful from Ahwaz.

In my original plan I had proposed to work the road between Mohammerah and Ahwaz, but on counting the cost I see that it would be probably too expensive as a start. If the river could not compete with the traffic it would be necessary to use the road also.

With twenty-four marches, on this route, it would be possible to land goods in Kermanshah in thirty-one days, in Hamadan in thirty-six days, and in Tehran in forty-

six. Compare this with the present route, where goods cannot be hoped for at Kermanshah by the traders under three or four months from the date of arrival at Bussorah, and they frequently take much longer.

The next question to be considered is the comparative cost of the two roads. This is a little difficult to estimate accurately, as it entails comparison between carriage of the shipping ton and the actual weights as carried by mules. I estimate that a mule-load from Bussorah to Kermanshah costs on an average $81\frac{1}{2}$ to $83\frac{1}{2}$ krans.

My calculation is as follows:—

Average rate from Bagdad to Kermanshah, 7 toman per mule.

Average rate from Bussorah to Bagdad, 32s. 6d. per ton.

One mule-load is, in Persia, one-half kharwar, or 325 lbs., and therefore equal to one-seventh of a ton.

The cost of one mule-load from Bagdad to Bussorah is, then, $11\frac{1}{2}$ krans, or if, allowing one mule-load as the difference between the shipping ton and its real weight, we take six mule-loads to the ton, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ krans.

Or $81\frac{1}{2}$ to $83\frac{1}{2}$ krans for the whole journey per mule.

To compete with this and still keep the disadvantages of the Bagdad road as an asset to the new route it would be necessary to keep the price of the road journey between Ahwaz and Kermanshah down to 80 krans, leaving the odd few krans as the price per mule-load on the Karun River.

It is, however, apparent that the new route could afford to be a trifle more expensive than the old one, owing to the great time saved and the interest on the money thereby involved. In Kermanshah I usually hire mules at 4 krans per diem—occasionally at $4\frac{1}{2}$ krans. On a regular route, when there is a press of work, the charwadar is apt to raise his prices. In order to avoid this, and to keep a regular rate on which the importer of British goods could depend, I would recommend the adoption of a system of subsidy, as used on the Seistan route, for the benefit of British traders. I am of opinion that I could arrange this, and will return to the subject in Part II of this letter, in which I explain how I propose this system should be worked. My object, then, would be to keep the rate down to 80 krans for the journey, and I would estimate the subsidy at 200 rupees per mensem.

It may be noted that this would make it impossible for a foreign Power to charge any toll for mules should they be in possession of the Bagdad route, and that even for mules carrying their own goods.

In conclusion, caravanserais would be reproductive works, for it is customary to charge for the hire of rooms, in addition to the profit made over selling grain for animals.

PART II.

In addition to the delays on the road which make trade with Persia difficult, there are other causes which have hindered the expansion of British trade.

I have frequently asked a merchant why he has imported a certain article when he could do much better in England. The answer has been, "I do not know where to go in England."

I would summarize the reasons why more articles of British manufacture are not found in general (as opposed to special) trade as follows:—

1. Want of a means of connection between the merchants in England and those in Persia.
2. Want of facilities for ordering and forwarding goods.
3. Want of connection between English and Persian merchants.

This difficulty is one that can be very easily remedied. In Kerman I was not very strongly in favour of sample rooms, for reasons which I gave at the time, and I remember that one of the chief of them was the difficulty of finding an agent who was capable of doing the work. This reason does not exist in Kermanshah and Hamadan. In both places I can find men fully fitted. In Hamadan we are particularly fortunate, for the agent of the Imperial Bank of Persia would take up the work, in which he would be assisted by his son, who was educated in England. I propose then to institute at both places sample rooms in charge of agents, who will not only show the articles sent them, but will visit the merchants at their offices and act as local commercial travellers.

These agents would book orders and be paid by the percentage allowed by the firms for whom they trade. For the fixing of these rates I propose addressing the

Chambers of Commerce in India and the Board of Trade in England. I may mention that at Hamadan the custom when dealing with Manchester firms is as follows:—

The merchant in Persia pays a deposit of 10 per cent. on giving his order; the firm then engages to land the goods at Bagdad within six months of receipt of instructions, and they hand over all papers connected with the goods to the Shipping Company, who release the goods on receipt of the money due. As I have already noted, agency fees at Bagdad are a heavy item, though probably few firms charge 5 per cent. like Messrs. Lynch, who have the advantage of being the shipping agents. Now I would suggest, should my scheme be approved, that Government should place one agent at Mohammerah and a second at Ahwaz. The system would then be that an order would be booked at Kermanshah, or at Hamadan by the local British agent, and would be dispatched to the firm concerned. The firm would then dispatch the goods to the care of the British forwarding agent at Mohammerah, who would forward them to Ahwaz, where the agent would send them on at subsidized rates to the agent who had ordered them.

The method of releasing goods would have to be decided, as it might be dangerous for the agent to receive all money without an inspecting officer. At the worst the present system could be adhered to.*

Until the Pusht-i-Kuh road was made possible, I would suggest similar appointments being made at Bussorah and Bagdad for forwarding purposes. I have noted that goods lie for a long time at Bussorah. There, however, in addition to Lynch's boats, Turkish boats which trade on the river, and the agent at Bussorah, in consigning the goods to the agent at Bagdad would be able, where opportunities appeared favourable to use the Turkish steamers and thus save time. These agents would, of course, work under the eye of the British Consular officers, and would thus be able to escape illegal charges in Turkey.

On the Pusht-i-Kuh road being ready, these men could be shifted to Mohammerah and Ahwaz, they would know their work, and so would not make mistakes in starting the new road. I have noted on the desirability of having a subsidized transport service. This appears the best method of assisting trade in Persia, as a foreign Power, in order to compete, must spend money in a similar way, and thus increases his expenses, which are possibly already large in the form of bounties. I would then recommend that, until the new road is ready, I be allowed to employ similar means on the Bagdad road. Then on the completion of the Pusht-i-Kuh road all the machinery would be ready, and would only require transfer from the one route to the other.

PART III.

To summarize, my suggestions are:—

1. The making of a mule road between Mohammerah or Ahwaz and Kermanshah. Cost roughly estimated at 1,60,000 rupees, but mainly reproductive.
2. Appointment of agents at Kermanshah and Hamadan to act as unpaid commercial agents. Opening of sample rooms at Kermanshah and Hamadan. Estimated cost at each place: 5 rupees per mensem for rent, 200 rupees initial expenditure.
3. Appointment of paid receiving and forwarding agents at Bussorah and Bagdad, to be afterwards transferred to Mohammerah and Ahwaz. Estimate 1,800 rupees per annum each.
4. Installation of a system of subsidized transport between Kermanshah and Bagdad, to be transferred to the Ahwaz-Pusht-i-Kuh road when ready. Estimate (the question would require to be raised, and the number of mules required to be settled before a complete estimate could be submitted; I would, however, put the amount at what I name), 200 rupees per mensem.

In conclusion, I would suggest the inclusion of the Khurramabad-Hamadan road in the Concession as far as Khurramabad. This would protect the interest of the road which I now propose, and, should the Khurramabad route ever become practicable, would insure to us the same benefits as would accrue to any other country which might possess the Concession for the upper part of the road.

As soon as ever I am permitted to leave Kermanshah I propose to travel over the

* *Vide* postscript.

route I have given in my scheme. I greatly regret having to submit this plan without having previously gone over the road, but it appeared to be that it was necessary that I should, at any rate, know the general opinion of the Government of India on the subject without further delay. The matter appeared to me so urgent, in order that we might be in the field before it was too late, that I telegraphed to you a general idea of what I proposed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) L. HAWORTH, *Captain*.

P.S.—With reference to my note on p. 5. The inspector of the bank, with whom I discussed the question, stated that the money could always be paid into the bank, the agent at Hamadan or Kermanshah could then send the bank receipt to the agent at the shipping port, who could then release the goods.

L. H.

Inclosure 3 in No. 358.

THE PUSHT-I-KUH ROUTE.

Particulars from Major Burton's Report on the Road.

[1563]

Stage.	Condition of Road.	Supplies.	Water and Fuel.	Remarks on Requirements for Mule Truck.
Dehbala to—				
Culgi (3776)	15 miles. Practicable throughout for laden animals and generally good.	Depend on whether crops are standing and presence of flocks.	Wood and water abundant	(Caravanseerai at Dehbala included in four allowed between Kermanshah and that place.) Caravanseerai. Supplies available and only require storing. This remark applies throughout, except at Arkawaz, where it is not proposed to make a halting place, and at the Jihko River, where they are to be obtained at one march distance.
Arkawaz Khushkadul (3380)	Road throughout good. 10 miles. Road good to half-way, afterwards bad slab rock in parts. 12½ miles.	Sheep, goats, and cattle, no supplies. Cultivated slopes, supplies in small quantities from lars in summer, large flocks at same time. Patches of cultivation near, is surrounded by irrigation. In spring much corn cultivation along road.	Water from river. Wood plentiful. Water scanty from springs	Caravanseerai water reservoir. Repairs to road required.
Inamzada Nasradin (2690)	Road good and practicable for animals, except at Pass of Pinda Rah and Kurthi River where it is most difficult and dangerous. 15½ miles.	Broad cultivated plain and plateau near, supplies dependant on crops and presence of large flocks of sheep and goats in April to October, good grazing in spring and early summer. In spring large amount of wheat and barley, also many thousands of sheep and goats and some cattle. At 1 mile distance is cultivated plateau which bears crops in spring. In spring quantity of wheat and barley crops near road, flocks of sheep and goats in spring and summer. Crops of barley and wheat in spring and of Indian corn in October, large flocks of goat and some cattle. Kurd camps from October to April, much grass.	Water plentiful, fuel scanty	Caravanseerai. As regards fuel, see general notes at end. At most places in Persia fuel is brought from a distance of one or two marches, especially in the big towns.
Zarinabad (2592)	Road practicable for laden animals, and good and easy, except at crossing of ravine, which is steep and narrow. 10½ miles.		Water plentiful. No fuel except thorn bushes.	Caravanseerai. Slight repairs to road. Thorn bushes are used throughout Persia as fuel.
Beharu (2040)	Road throughout passable for laden animals. 10½ miles.		Water abundant from river, fuel thorn bushes.	Caravanseerai.
Noza Ali (1170)	Road throughout very bad, at least one-half is unridable, and were not the steep ascents and descents of gypsum and of crumbling rock, animals could not retain foot-hold. 13½ miles.		Brackish spring, cane brakes	Repairs to road.
Kalata (1040)	Road for the first 3 miles hard and scarcely practicable for laden animals owing to boulders and slabs of rock, afterwards good. 14 miles.		Water from springs	Caravanseerai. Repairs to road.

Stage.	Condition of Road.	Supplies.	Water and Fuel.	Remarks on Requirements for Mule Track.
Tekezi River ..	Road throughout good. 12½ miles	..	River water brackish, but drinkable. No fuel.	Caravanserai.
Tappa Patak ..	Road throughout good. 13 miles	..	Springs of water. Telezi River about a mile distant.	
Jhikao River (6000)	Road throughout good. 11 miles	..	River water, scrub fuel, grass abundant.	Caravanserai. (Is unavoidable unless next march can be shortened, in which case a second water reservoir would be necessary somewhere between the two rivers.)
Karkhah River	Road throughout good. 32½ miles	..	River water, some fuel, grass abundant.	Caravanserai. Subject of ferry is dealt with in the main Report I have submitted.
Dizful	Road crosses swampy ground and irrigation channels, which are deep. Passage of Karkhah is easy only in autumn months, and even then reaches loads of mules. Many small bridges and culverts also would be necessary in the plain. 14 miles.	Crops standing in spring, and autumn till April flocks and herds present. Crops of wheat in spring, in winter some cultivation. Kurd camps, crops, and herds frequent. In winter large flocks of sheep and goats (no note on crops).	Water throughout, grass and forage abundant.	Subject of bridges for irrigation channels is dealt with in the main Report.

Notes on Road divided into Two Sections.

Up to third stage wood is plentiful

Dehkala to Kalaia.—Traverses the intricate hills. Water is abundant and forage plentiful, grass being especially luxuriant in spring and summer. adjacent to the road, after that procurable from mountains.

From Arakawaz to Mena River (fifth stage) crops are adjacent to the road. February produces luxuriant herbage, which dries up in March and April, June to September heat is very great, water is procurable throughout, except in the track between the Jhikao and the Karkhah; it is, however, impregnated with salts and sulphur.

From Kermanshah to Dehkala caravans already travel, so no special Report is necessary on the subject. As they carry their own supplies, caravanserais would be required for storing, once the route was a regular one.

With regard to the general question of supplies, it is quite certain that as caravanserais started and a regular demand sprang up that of those who now cultivate for a season and then move off to winter or summer quarters a part would remain behind to meet the demand and supply the market. Thus small permanent colonies would spring up. I have noted this occurring in other places.

Inclosure 4 in No. 358.

Consul Haworth to Major Cox.

(No. 56.)

Sir,

Kermanshah, October 31, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith certain suggestions which I have to make with reference to the extension of British trade in Western Persia. This Report has been delayed by my having to wait for some information and by its being considerably amplified.

In case the Government did not propose to take up the question themselves, I think it highly probable that the Imperial Bank of Persia would do so, especially if the Government supplied the money.

I could, I think, get a British subject here to take up the idea, but I am of the opinion that from a point of view of British trade it would be very much better if the Government supplied the money, so that they could dictate the terms and see that the route was for the benefit of British trade, and not for that of the Company concerned.

I am especially frightened of Messrs. Lynch, who have the name in these parts of being very grasping.

I have, &c.
(Signed) L. HAWORTH, Captain.

Inclosure 5 in No. 358.

Major Cox to Government of India.

Sir,

Bushire, December 29, 1907.

I HAVE the honour to lay before the Government of India, a copy of a Report submitted by His Majesty's Consul, Kermanshah, in continuation of his telegram dated the 10th October, 1907, in which he urged the importance of opening up the Pusht-i-Kuh route between Ahwaz and Kermanshah. Owing to absence in connection with the recent search for the Humaidi pirates, I have been unable to deal with the papers before.

2. In the course of correspondence regarding the probable advent of the Bagdad Railway, and the consequent likelihood of a German campaign against the British commerce which now follows the Shatt-el-Arab route, I have more than once during the past year commended to the attention of Government the increased potential value to us with which the alternative routes into South-western Persia via the Karun have now become endowed.

Similarly, by the light of the Anglo-Russian Convention lately concluded, Captain Haworth now urges the vital importance of the Ahwaz-Kermanshah route in particular.

I think I am right in gathering from the past correspondence that the fundamental importance to us of the early improvement of communications through the region under reference is primarily accepted by His Majesty's Government, and that at present the question is rather one of ways and means and the selection of a favourable opportunity for forward action on our part.

Unfortunately in this latter connection His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, speaking of Messrs. Lynch's Luristan Concession in a recent despatch (No. 228 of the 10th October to the Foreign Office), expressed the view that the present moment was most inopportune for pressing the fulfilment of Concessions held by foreigners, owing to the hostility of the National Assembly towards foreign enterprise generally.

The political situation in Tehran, however, is nothing if not kaleidoscopic, and it is possible that His Majesty's Representative may now consider as seems *prima facie* to be the case, that developments following on the recent abortive *coup d'état* at the capital have made the outlook much more favourable to the solution of the problem now under consideration than was the case when he penned the despatch referred to.

I particularly allude to the elevation of the Nizam-es-Sultaneh to the post of Prime Minister. This venerable official, who, it will be remembered, came into acute issue with us as Governor-General of Arabistan a few years ago, seems anxious to bury, if he cannot forget, the past in this respect. He is now I believe on most happy terms with His Majesty's Legation, and was at any rate extremely friendly, and, as far as he could be, helpful, during his recent sojourn as Governor-General of Fars; but what is chiefly significant at the present moment is the fact that he is uncle and father-in-law of the Sardar-i-Mukarram, now Governor-General of Arabistan-cum-Luristan, whose active

interest in the opening up of communications through Luristan has been the subject of frequent reference during the past year. Moreover, the Nizam himself has very large vested interests in Arabistan, which he would presumably be glad to promote.

Should the above hopeful surmise as to the improvement of the situation in Tehran be considered by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to be well founded, it would seem to follow that the exercise of any official pressure upon the Persian Government (a course which he strongly deprecates) might be avoided, and that just as much or more might be achieved by our securing the sympathy and unobtrusive co-operation of the Nizam-es-Sultaneh and the Sardar-i-Mukarram in the furtherance of a project which, when put into execution, is likely to work just as much to their profit as ours.

3. Supposing therefore for a moment that by the light of recent developments forward action in some form is considered expedient, the first thing to be done seems to be for us to decide in what form and which direction our energies should be directed.

There are two routes to be considered: the Dizful-Khurramabad alignment, the adoption of which has hitherto proved hopeless; and the Dizful-Kermanshahr route now advocated by His Majesty's Consul, Kermanshah.

Captain Haworth submits his recommendations regarding the latter alternative with a confident enthusiasm which enforces sympathy, but whereas according to his view one of the primary conditions for the success of his scheme is the exclusion of Messrs. Lynch from participation in it, it seems to me that under terms of their Luristan Concession they alone as the "Road Company" would be entitled to undertake the construction of any one road now inaugurated between Ahwaz and the north. Had they already selected and inaugurated the Dizful-Khurramabad route, thereby using up their Concession for "one road" between Ahwaz and Tehran, then perhaps a Concession for another road from Dizful to Kermanshah might be considered open to any one who might be able to acquire it from the Persian Government; but so long as no road has been commenced, Messrs. Lynch seem clearly to have the sole right to take the first step.

In any case, having regard to the views expressed by Mr. Marling as to the hostility displayed by the National Assembly to the grant of Concessions to foreigners, it is probable that His Majesty's Government at present would feel unable to encourage any British competitor in the quest for a fresh Concession. It would seem therefore that the only course open to us is to make the best of Messrs. Lynch.

4. But before Government decide to press one alternative to the extinguishment of the other, I venture to suggest for their consideration, that it would appear practically possible to keep a hold on both routes without technically exceeding the terms of Messrs. Lynch's Concession. I mean that if the Dizful-Kermanshah alternative were decided upon for our main effort as offering the best advantages and chances of success under existing conditions, it seems reasonable to suppose, in view of the favourable attitude of the merchants of Khurramabad, that a branch to the latter town from the most convenient stage, would come into existence automatically. In any case the furtherance of such a branch is a matter in regard to which Messrs. Lynch, or we working through them, should be able to come to an understanding with the Sardar-i-Mukarram.

5. The selection of one route or the combination of both alternatives are questions about which opinions will doubtless differ; but having regard to recent developments I venture to think that it will be accepted that the opening of communications northwards from Ahwaz by one route or another has become a matter of imperial moment in the general interests of British commerce.

If that is conceded and if the Road Company can satisfy His Majesty's Government that they are unable by their unaided efforts to take up the project, then I submit that the question of supplying the necessary aid of working the Concession ourselves through the Road Company as our man of straw is a matter for the urgent consideration of His Majesty's Government.

6. For the present I feel that it is premature for me to offer comment upon the details of Captain Haworth's scheme, which in some places overlaps suggestions made by Captain Lorimer, with both of whom I am communicating further. Meanwhile I respectfully submit the foregoing observations for the consideration of the Government of India and His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, to whom a copy of this communication is being forwarded.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. Z. COX, Major,
Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

[8976]

No. 359.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 43.)
Sir,

Tehran, February 28, 1908.

ALTHOUGH it was generally known that the Turkish Ambassador's resignation, tendered some little time ago, had been accepted by the Sultan, the sudden recall of Chemsuddin Bey, and also of the Councillor of the Embassy, came as a complete surprise, and there has been a good deal of speculation as to its cause.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh told me that, so far as he was aware, it had no connection with the frontier question, nor did he think that the explanation given in a Reuter's telegram from Constantinople, that the Porte thereby desired to delay the arrival of Ala-es-Sultaneh as Persian Ambassador in Constantinople, could be correct, as the Sultan's Agreement for His Highness had already been received. The most probable explanation that I have yet heard is that given me by the new Turkish Chargé d'Affaires, Remzi Bey, viz., that he had been meddling too much in internal questions. Chemsuddin Bey had always been in intimate relations with the great Mujtehedes, who have done so much to promote the cause of Constitutionalism, and it is not unnatural to suppose that the Sultan may suspect him of having become tainted with democratic ideas, or even of having encouraged the popular movement against autocracy, and may prefer to be represented in Tehran by someone whose views on such questions are above suspicion. It is generally believed, also, that Chemsuddin was appointed as Ambassador here in honourable exile, in consequence of his supposed liberal opinions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

[8943]

No. 360.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 129.)
Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 6, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky, giving, in accordance with your request, the rough draft of an identic note which should be presented to the Persian Government intimating that, in the future, as had been the case in the past, the Government of the Shah should rely on the good offices of Great Britain and Russia, in the case of differences arising between Persia and Turkey.

I have informed M. Isvolsky that instructions have been sent to Mr. Marling to concert with his Russian colleague, for drawing up a note in the sense desired.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 360.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Le 22 Février (6 Mars), 1908.

VOUS avez eu l'obligeance de me faire savoir, par votre lettre du 19 Février (3 Mars), que le Gouvernement Britannique est d'avis qu'en vue du fait de l'évacuation de Sooudj-Boulak il serait opportun de faire au Gouvernement Persan une communication en réponse à sa circulaire de protestation contre les agissements Turcs. En conséquence je viens d'expédier à M. de Hartwig une instruction à ce sujet, l'invitant à rédiger, d'accord avec Mr. Marling, une note à adresser au Gouvernement du Schah, note dont le contenu serait à peu près le suivant:—

Le Gouvernement Persan a pu se convaincre que les démarches communes de l'Angleterre et de la Russie—les deux États qui ont joué depuis longtemps dans les différends Turco-Persans un rôle tout particulier, fondé sur la marche des événements historiques—ont produit le résultat qu'on en attendait, l'évacuation de Sooudj-Boulak par les forces Turques étant un fait acquis. Vu que les deux Puissances se proposent de continuer à suivre à l'avenir la même ligne de conduite bienveillante envers la Perse, il semble désirable, dans l'avantage de cette dernière elle-même, qu'elle continue

aussi à confier, comme par le passé, la sauvegarde de ses intérêts dans ce différend aux mêmes deux Etats.

Il va de soi que la rédaction définitive doit être abandonnée aux soins des deux Représentants à Téhéran.

En vous transmettant ce qui précède, je crois pouvoir exprimer l'espoir, mon cher Ambassadeur, que Sir E. Grey voudra bien munir Mr. Marling d'instructions analogues.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,
(Signé) ISVOLSKY.

[8946]

No. 361.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 131.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 8, 1908.

ON receipt of your telegram No. 51 of the 20th ultimo, I communicated confidentially to M. Isvolsky the information which had reached His Majesty's Government as to the possibility of the Persian Government contemplating the appointment of European advisers to assist in the reform of the Persian Administration, and also the views held by you that the appointment of German advisers could not be tolerated, and that, should foreign assistance be sought, it should be left to the British and Russian Governments to recommend suitable persons.

I have the honour to transmit copy of a Memorandum which I have received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in which it is stated, on information received from M. de Hartwig, that nothing definitive appears to have been decided in regard to the above question, and that the appointment of European advisers seems to be somewhat remote. The Imperial Government, nevertheless, agree with that of His Majesty, that if the Persian Government proceed to put into execution such a project, and were to select as advisers persons other than those recommended by Great Britain and Russia, the interests of the two Powers would be seriously affected. The Russian Government are, therefore, of opinion that it would be necessary to make Representations to the Persian Government if the scheme assumed a more definite form.

They consider that, in any case, it would be well to allow M. Bizot time to enter into possession of his new post, and to create for himself a stable and firm position.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 361.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

LE Ministre de Russie à Téhéran télégraphie que pendant la séance du Samedi dernier un des membres du Medjliss avait exprimé, en passant, l'opinion qu'il serait peut-être utile d'adjoindre aux Ministres Persans des Conseillers spécialistes Européens; néanmoins, rien de définitif ni de précis n'a été décidé à ce sujet. Ainsi, la possibilité de la nomination de Conseillers étrangers, dont il est question dans l'aide-mémoire confidentiel de l'Ambassadeur Britannique du 19 Février (3 Mars) au courant, n'est pas exclue, il est vrai, mais il semblerait que cette éventualité est encore très éloignée. Pourtant le Gouvernement Impérial considère, tout comme le Gouvernement Britannique, que si la Perse procédait à la mise en exécution d'un pareil plan et si le choix tombait sur des candidats autres que ceux qui seraient recommandés par l'Angleterre et la Russie, les intérêts de ces deux Puissances se trouveraient gravement lésés; il est d'avis, en conséquence, qu'il serait effectivement utile de faire auprès du Gouvernement du Schah une démarche à ce propos, si le projet en question prenait une forme plus précise.

Il serait en tout cas désirable de laisser à M. Bizot, le Conseiller Financier nouvellement engagé au service du Schah, le temps de prendre possession de son poste et de se créer, comme il faut l'espérer, une position stable et ferme.

Le 23 Février (7 Mars), 1908.

[8947]

No. 362.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 132.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 8, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a confidential and urgent Memorandum which I have received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs confirming the news which had already reached you that Tahir Pacha had received orders to return to Urumia and to resume the negotiations which had been temporarily interrupted.

The Memorandum draws attention to the incompetence of the First Persian Delegate, Mokteham-es-Sultaneh for his post, and considers that he should be replaced by a more suitable person. The Russian Vice-Consul at Urumia has indicated one of the Persian Delegates, Mustechar-ed-Dowleh, as a fairly satisfactory substitute, and points out that were this gentleman to be appointed considerable time would be saved, as much delay would ensue if a new Commissioner were to be dispatched to the frontier.

M. de Hartwig appears to have been instructed to urge the arrangement on the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs and to indicate at the same time the danger with which Persia is threatened by the concentration of Turkish troops in the vilayets neighbouring the frontier.

The Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs expresses the wish to be informed as soon as possible whether you agree with the above proposal, and if you would be disposed to furnish Mr. Marling with the necessary instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 362.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson, February 24 (March 8), 1908.

(Confidentielle.)

D'APRÈS les renseignements que vient de faire parvenir l'Ambassadeur de Russie à Constantinople, le Grand Vézir a expédié à Tahir Pacha l'ordre de retourner immédiatement à Ourmiah et de reprendre les négociations avec les Commissaires Persans, interrompues il y a quelques jours.

Il est fort probable qu'ainsi qu'il est dit dans l'aide-mémoire de l'Ambassade Britannique du 19 Février (3 Mars), le Premier Délégué Ottoman est muni d'instructions secrètes spéciales qui ne sont pas conformes aux instructions générales données aux membres Turcs de la Commission. D'autre part, les renseignements venant d'Ourmiah établissent d'une manière certaine le fait que le Premier Délégué Persan, Mokhtecham-ous-Saltaneh, est incapable de remplir d'une façon quelque peu satisfaisante la mission qui lui avait été confiée, et qu'en outre ses relations personnelles avec Tahir Pacha sont très tendues. Dans ces conditions, le seul moyen de prévenir, ne fût-ce que pour quelque temps, l'échec complet des pourparlers serait de faire remplacer Mokhtecham-ous-Saltaneh par une autre personne plus capable de mener les négociations avec les Délégués Turcs.

Le Vice-Consul de Russie à Ourmiah attire l'attention sur un des Délégués Persans, Mostechar-oud-Dovleh, qui serait à son avis la personne la plus appropriée à remplacer avec plus ou moins de succès le Premier Délégué actuel. Cette combinaison présente encore l'avantage d'une économie considérable de temps, car l'envoi sur les lieux d'un nouveau Commissaire retarderait à l'infini la continuation des pourparlers.

Par suite, le Ministre Impérial des Affaires Étrangères vient de charger le Ministre de Russie à Téhéran de conseiller instamment à Mouchir-oud-Dovleh de mettre à exécution ce plan, qui seul, pour le moment, paraît présenter quelques chances de succès, et à signaler à Hassan-Khan le danger dont menace la Perse la concentration des troupes Turques dans les vilayets limitrophes.

L'état dont se trouve actuellement le différend Turco-Persan nécessitant des mesures promptes, le Ministre Impérial serait fort obligé à l'Ambassadeur Britannique de lui faire savoir aussitôt que possible si Sir E. Grey est enclin à se ranger à ce point de vue, et à munir Mr. Marling d'instructions dans ce sens.

[8948]

No. 363.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 133.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 8, 1908.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 54 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that I have received a letter from M. Isvolsky stating that the Russian Government consider that the instructions issued by the French Government to M. Bizot fully guarantee Russian financial interests in Persia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[8934]

No. 364.

Sir A. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 52.)

Sir,

Brussels, March 13, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 22 of the 6th instant, as well as of a private letter from Mr. Vansittart to Mr. Tyrrell, which the latter was good enough to send me for my information respecting the Belgian Customs officials in Persia.

As instructed by you in the above-mentioned despatch, I spoke to M. Davignon on this subject to-day. I told his Excellency that, as he had asked (as reported by me in my despatch No. 8 of the 3rd January last) whether we had any fault to find with M. Mornard, the present Belgian administrator, I was glad to be able to say that you were very favourably disposed towards him, and had instructed our Representative at Tehran to take action in concert with his Russian colleague with a view to preventing his dismissal and that of other Belgian officials by the Persian Government. Whilst mentioning to him confidentially the action of the German Chargé d'Affaires in urging the Persian Government to dismiss all the Belgian officials and put Germans in their place, I thought it well to add that this Chargé d'Affaires appeared to be a somewhat impulsive person, given to holding, both to the Persian Ministers and to his colleagues, language not prescribed by his Government. I at the same time took an opportunity of observing that the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires, M. Warzée, seemed to have shown great judgment, and generally to have defended Belgian interests with much ability during a period of exceptional difficulty, and that our Minister at Tehran, from whom I had lately heard, had spoken very highly of him, and also of M. Mornard. The latter had, I thought, carefully avoided the mistake which, notwithstanding his abilities, had proved fatal to M. Naus, that of trying to play a leading part in the domestic and foreign politics of Persia.

M. Davignon said that he was very pleased to hear that the British Government was disposed to support the Belgian Customs administration under M. Mornard. He had already heard that the Russian Government held views on this question very similar to those which I had just expressed. Of M. Warzée his Excellency spoke in very appreciative terms. He himself, he said, had recommended him to Baron de Favereau for a Consular appointment, M. Warzée being a college friend of one of his sons, and belonging to a family resident at Spa, in his own constituency. He had, while quite a junior officer, been placed by the sudden death of M. t'Serstevens in a position of great responsibility at Tehran, had acquitted himself excellently at a critical moment, and had written excellent reports on the Persian situation. I have no fear, from the way in which his Excellency spoke of M. Warzée, whom he seemed to regard as his own special protégé, that the latter's professional prospects will suffer any injury from any press campaign against him which M. Priem or M. Naus may try to instigate.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ARTHUR H. HARDINGE.

[9210]

No. 365.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 47.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, March 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier question.

Constantinople telegram No. 59 of the 15th instant.

I think that it would be advisable for me to previously inform the Russian Government, should it be intended to send Colonel Maunsell, even as a private individual, to visit the Turco-Persian frontier, as it is quite possible that they might raise objections thereto.

(Addressed to Foreign Office; sent to Constantinople and Tehran.)

[9211]

No. 366.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 61.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, March 16, 1908.

I HAVE received the following telegram from Consul-General Wratislaw, dispatched two days ago:—

"I have lately been told by my Russian colleague that a report had reached him that the Shah's representative on the Frontier Commission would possibly be changed. In the Russian Vice-Consul's opinion this idea was greatly to be deprecated."

[9212]

No. 367.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 62.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Pera, March 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

I have to-day received the following telegram, dated yesterday, No. 23, from Mr. Wratislaw at Urmia:—

"The chief Turkish Commissioner has written to inform me that he will come back to Urmia in accordance with instructions from Constantinople, but that his arrival may be delayed for a few days pending the receipt of further orders, for which he has asked."

[9213]

No. 368.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 63.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, March 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Please refer to Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 23.

The Porte has been considering the question of issuing fresh instructions to Tahir Pasha of a nature which would be a practical basis of negotiation for the Joint Commission. There is, however, bound to be some delay, as such instructions would have to be approved by the Palace.

[9112]

No. 369.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 16.)

(No. 78.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 16, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines and incidence of expenses on the Meshed-Seistan line.

Major Sykes has addressed to me the following telegram dated the 15th instant:—

"The following information has been supplied to me by the Persian Director:—

"The Russians pay all expenses, including rent, repairs, and wages of gholams. He himself pays only the wages of Persian clerks and the rent of a few offices."

[8916]

No. 370.

Foreign Office to Mr. Barclay.

(No. 52.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 16, 1908.

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

With reference to your telegram No. 59 of the 15th instant.

Colonel Maunsell will not go to frontier on account of illness.

[8785]

No. 371.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 16, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, the accompanying copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran,* reporting that the subsidy of the German school there is secured on the Persian customs, and is payable in quarterly instalments.

Mr. Marling adds that the revenue in question is rapidly declining, and he proposes to remind the Persian Government of the British lien thereupon. A copy of the despatch referred to by Mr. Marling in this telegram is also inclosed.†

According to the information in possession of this Department, the yield on the southern customs was in 1905-6 approximately 125,000*l.*; the annual charges in respect of the British advances of 1903 and 1904 amount to 23,270*l.*; the yearly interest on the loans of the Imperial Bank is approximately 50,000*l.*, and although the latter are not expressly secured on the customs, this revenue constitutes in effect the only source from which payment can be expected. If the cost of collection of the customs, which forms a first charge, is also taken into account, it is apparent that the margin available is by no means excessive.

In these circumstances Sir E. Grey proposes, subject to the concurrence of Mr. Morley, to dispatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg the telegram, of which a copy is inclosed in draft form.‡

I am, &c.

(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

* No. 343.

† No. 216.

‡ See No. 389.

[9303]

No. 372.

Mr. Preece to Foreign Office.—(Received March 17.)

Sir,

1, St. James' Place, London, March 14, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 3rd instant, referring to a further telegram received from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, advising that the moment is inopportune to urge the Bakhtiari Chiefs to allow us to pay the guards ourselves, and that the payment of the instalment, due last November, has been left to Captain Lorimer's discretion.

I am instructed to say that the Syndicate are most obliged for the above information, and are perfectly content with Mr Marling's action, and beg to leave the matter entirely in his hands.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. R. PREECE.

[9252]

No. 373.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received March 17.)

Sir,

Admiralty, March 16, 1908.

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the Commander-in-chief, East Indies, proposes to leave on the 4th proximo for the Persian Gulf and asks whether there is any objection to his visiting Persian ports and Bussorah. I am to inquire whether the Secretary of State sees any objection to this course.

I am, &c.

(Signed) C. I. THOMAS.

[9334]

No. 374.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 17.)

(No. 48)

(Telegraphic.)

St. Petersburg, March 17, 1908.

R. YOUR despatch No. 55. Exchange of telegraph lines.

Russian Government have no objection to treating separately the question of exchange of telegraph lines and that of the transfer of the rights over the Khanikin section. Minister for Foreign Affairs is ready to furnish Russian Minister at Tehran with instructions in regard to former question in the sense of his letter to me of the 25th January (o.s.), copy of which was forwarded in my despatch No. 73, as soon as he is informed that similar instructions have been sent to British Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran. I have not spoken to Minister for Foreign Affairs in regard to suggestion made in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 70 as to question of exchange being presented to the Persian Government by the two interested Telegraph Departments.

P. If it meets with your approval, a proposal might be made by me that the two Representatives should be authorized to settle the whole question as to mode of approaching the Persian Government.

R. As regards transfer of rights over the Khanikin section, Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that the matter is being examined by the competent Department.

(Sent to Tehran.)

No. 375.

[9335]

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 17.)**(No. 49.) St. Petersburg, March 17, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 76 and Tehran telegram No. 75: Turco-Persian frontier. Russian Government agree to not raising, for the present, question of replacing Persian Delegate, though they maintain their view that he is not up to his task.

Russian Ambassador at Constantinople has been instructed to support at the Porte the proposal of the Persian Government that the negotiations should be based on the frontier line being traced in neutral zone, and Russian Minister at Tehran has been told to instruct Russian Vice-Consul to assist as far as he can in the discussions being conducted on that basis.

Russian Government would be glad if His Majesty's Government would send similar instructions to British Representatives at Constantinople and Tehran.

(Sent to Constantinople and Tehran.)

No. 376.

[9307]

*Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 17.)**(No. 79.) P. Tehran, March 17, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

BIRJAND telegraph office. Attempt to obtain a special room for Russian telegraphist.

Please refer to my telegram No. 44 of the 13th ultimo.

The mistimed zeal of an official, who misrepresents his actions to M. de Hartwig, and who knows nothing of proposed exchange, may account for this attempt, which, to judge from the reports of His Majesty's Consul in Seistan, is pretty evidently being made.

No. 377.

[9335]

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. G. Barclay.**(No. 54.) P. Foreign Office, March 17, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier.

Your action should be in conformity with that of your Russian colleague (see telegram from St. Petersburg No. 49 of to-day).

No. 378.

[9335]

*Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.**(No. 61.) P. Foreign Office, March 17, 1908.*
(Telegraphic.)

TURCO-PERSIAN frontier. Please refer to telegram from St. Petersburg No. 49 of to-day.

You should send instructions to our Vice-Consul to exercise his influence in the manner suggested by the Persian Government.

No. 379.

[9404]

Supplementary Memorandum respecting British Interests in the Persian Gulf.

[See Confidential Paper No. 9161.]

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*The Arms Traffic.**(Communicated by the India Office.)*

THE position in regard to the arms traffic on the various sections of the Persian Gulf littoral is briefly as follows:—

1. *Muscat*.—Muscat has for many years been an emporium for the arms traffic, and the trade has now attained to such dimensions that in 1906-7 the total value of the imports of arms and ammunition amounted to 112,338*l*. The situation is governed by the fact that the Sultan of Muscat has Commercial Treaties with France, Holland, and the United States, under the terms of which it would be impossible for him to impose special restrictions on the importation of arms and ammunition into his dominions without the consent of the Powers in question.

The result is that arms flow freely into Muscat, and are thence distributed throughout Persia, Arabia, and Afghanistan. From the last-named country a considerable proportion of the arms find their way to the tribesmen of the Indian North-West Frontier, with results which have been described by the Government of India as "constituting a grave menace to the peace of the border." To such an alarming extent has this process been going on that in February 1907 the Government of India estimated that out of the 270,000 men belonging to the frontier tribes no less than 94,000 possessed breech-loading rifled arms.

The view is pretty generally held that, until Muscat is closed to the importation of arms it will be impossible to place any effective check on the export trade by native *dhow*s to other ports on the Gulf littoral.

The total number of rifles imported from Great Britain into Muscat reached 13,831 in the year 1900. During the two following years there was a marked decline, but in 1904-5 the total number of imported rifles was believed to be not less than 20,000. Recent figures point to a still more remarkable increase, and the custom-house returns show that, during the quarter ending the 30th September, 1907, some 10,000 rifles and 7,000,000 cartridges were shipped from the United Kingdom to Muscat. Besides the imports from this country there is known to be a considerable trade with the port of Marseilles. The Government of India calculated in February 1907 that, whereas in 1899-1900 only about one-seventh of the imports were from France, by 1905 the proportion of French arms had risen to two-fifths. M. Goguyer, a local French merchant, who has from time to time lent large sums of money to the Sultan, is known to be deeply involved in the arms traffic. Another French merchant, M. Caracalla, was reported in July 1906 to have arrived at Muscat, with the apparent intention of taking part in the trade. In the returns for 1906-7 Belgium appears for the first time as an importer of arms into Muscat, though it is believed that rifles of Belgian manufacture have for many years past been imported in considerable numbers.

In 1897 the Government of India determined to make an effort to check the arms traffic at Muscat, and, accordingly, in January 1898 joint representations were made to the Sultan by the British and Persian Governments, urging him to co-operate in the suppression of the traffic. His Highness fell in with the suggestion, and on the 13th January of that year issued (1) a Notification warning his subjects that the importation of arms and ammunition into India and Persia was illegal; and (2) a Proclamation authorizing British and Persian vessels of war to search, within Muscat territorial waters, vessels carrying the British, Persian, or Muscat flag, as well

[1563]

4 L

Government of India's letter of February 21, 1907.

India Office to Foreign Office, November 26, 1907.

Government of India's letter of February 10, 1898.

as Muscat vessels in Indian and Persian waters, and to confiscate arms and ammunition intended for Indian and Persian ports.

The right of search does not extend to the vessels of other nations, and, as has been stated above, the terms of his Commercial Treaties render it impossible for the Sultan, without the consent of the Treaty Powers, to impose any general restriction on the import of arms into Muscat.

In the same year, 1898, with a view to imposing a further check on the arms traffic in Oman, rules were issued requiring all British subjects possessing arms within the Sultan's territory to register the same at the British Consulate. It may be doubted, however, whether this measure has done more than throw the trade to an increasing extent into foreign hands. In the same way it seems not unlikely that the action recently taken by the British India Steam Navigation Company to check the smuggling of arms in small quantities by the Company's steamers in the Gulf may only result in diverting traffic of this kind to vessels which are not placed under such restrictions.*

It may be added that the import of arms at Gwadar, the Sultan of Muscat's dependency on the Mekran coast, was prohibited by a Proclamation issued by His Highness on the 3rd March, 1891.

In March 1904, the Government of India proposed that the terms of the Muscat Proclamation of 1898 should be extended so as to cover the export of arms to Turkish ports, and to the territories of the Sheikhs of Bahrein and Koweit, and of the Trucial Chiefs, as well as to "Indian and Persian" ports, which already fell within the scope of the Proclamation. This proposal was not carried into effect, it being at the time held undesirable, in view of the Sheikh's position in regard to the warfare in Central Arabia,² to impose any fresh restrictions on the importation of arms at Koweit. The necessary arrangements with Turkey also presented some difficulty.

The Government of India have also from time to time recommended—

- (1.) That the French Government should be approached with a view to their being induced to agree to the total prohibition of the arms traffic at Muscat; and
- (2.) That the Porte should be asked to agree to our patrolling the Turkish littoral against arms smugglers, or at least to declare the illegality of the traffic.

Neither of these suggestions has hitherto borne fruit. The question was passed in review by the Government of India as recently as February 1907, and the conclusion at which they arrived, after a careful and detailed examination of the case, was that the arms traffic would continue to flourish and increase until an Agreement with France was arrived at, and a complete prohibition was enforced against the importation of arms and ammunition into the territories of the Sultan of Muscat. The whole question will come up for discussion at the forthcoming International Conference at Brussels.

Under the Brussels Act of 1890 for regulating the traffic in arms, any one of the Signatory Powers that has occasion to authorize such traffic in territories of its own lying within the region affected by the provisions of the Act, is required to establish a "public warehouse," under the control of its local Administration, in which all imported arms must be deposited, and from which they may not be withdrawn without the previous authorization of the Administration.

There seems no hope of obtaining the consent of France, and the other Powers having Treaty relations with Muscat, to the Sultan's prohibiting, *proprio motu*, the import of arms into his dominions. The only remedy for the present evil would, therefore, appear to be to bring Muscat, at the forthcoming Conference, within the scope of the Brussels Act of 1890, and to enforce there the provisions requiring the establishment of a warehouse under proper supervision.

If this is done, two questions will arise:—

(a.) What inducement shall be offered to the Sultan, a Sovereign whose independence has been guaranteed by Great Britain and France, to accept restrictions on a traffic amounting to 112,338*l.*† per annum, and yielding a customs revenue of 5,617*l.* per annum?

(b.) How will it be possible to provide efficient machinery for carrying out the provisions of the Act, without admitting a system of international control inconsistent with the maintenance of the present political predominance of Great Britain?

* See below, under Koweit.

† Value of imports of arms and ammunition in 1906-7; 5,617*l.* represents 5 per cent. (the amount of the customs duty at Muscat) on this sum.

The control of the arms traffic would presumably be vested in the Sultan's Customs Department. There is thus afforded an additional argument in favour of the Government of India's proposals,³ renewed during the present year, that they should acquire the control of the Customs Administration of Muscat, guaranteeing the Sultan a minimum income of 20,000 dollars per mensem (25,600*l.* per annum at the rate of exchange current in 1907). It has been suggested that a suitable compensation to the Sultan for the loss of income entailed by the prohibition of the arms traffic would be to double the present subsidy he receives from Indian revenues (5,760*l.* per annum), and to raise it gradually, as may be necessary, to 15,000*l.* per annum. It is to be feared that if other Powers contribute towards the compensation paid to His Highness, they will obtain a *locus standi* for interference in the Muscat Customs Administration, which would constitute a serious disturbance of the *status quo*.

2. *Bahrein*.—On the 30th April, 1898, the Sheikh of Bahrein, on the advice of the Resident in the Persian Gulf, agreed "absolutely to prohibit the importation of arms into Bahrein territory or exportation therefrom"; and to enforce the prohibition, he issued on the same day—

(1.) A Notification declaring that the import and export of arms into and from the Islands of Bahrein was absolutely forbidden, and that in future all arms and ammunition imported or exported would be seized and confiscated as property of the State.

(2.) A Proclamation conferring on British and Persian vessels of war permission to search vessels carrying the British, Persian, or Bahrein flag in Bahrein territorial waters, as well as Bahrein vessels in Indian or Persian waters, and to confiscate all arms and ammunition (weapons of war) intended for Indian or Persian ports, or for the Islands of Bahrein.

The effect of the prohibition at Bahrein was at once perceptible in the customs returns, the total value of the imports of arms and ammunition, which had amounted to 30,849*l.* in 1897, falling to 313*l.* in the following year. In October 1905 the Sheikh of Bahrein addressed a Memorial to the Government of India, in which, among other alleged grievances, he complained of the fact that he was obliged to interdict the sale of arms, and was thereby deprived of an advantage enjoyed by all the Arab Chiefs along the Arabian coast. He was informed in reply, in May 1906, that the restriction on the importation of arms at Bahrein had first been imposed in 1895 by himself on his own initiative, and his attention was drawn to the measures he had himself spontaneously taken from time to time to stop the traffic. It was also pointed out to him that the Sheikh of Koweit and the Sheikhs of the Trucial Coast had similarly prohibited the traffic of arms in their territory, and he was given to understand that the Government of India would not consider for a moment the possibility of cancelling or modifying the Agreement he had concluded with the British Government on this point.

There seems good reason to believe that a considerable amount of illicit arms traffic goes on at Bahrein. Writing in December 1906, Major Cox furnished evidence that the port was rapidly rising to importance as a centre of the trade. The business in arms there, hitherto confined to one dealer, had been taken over by a Company, two of the shareholders being friends of Sheikh Esa and opponents of customs reform. He added that the business had been largely extended, and Bahrein was being used as a distribution centre for supplying Persia.

3. *Koweit*.—On the 24th May, 1900, the Sheikh of Koweit entered into an agreement with the British Government, by which he engaged "absolutely to prohibit the importation of arms into Koweit or exportation therefrom." To carry out this engagement he issued on the same day (1) a Notification declaring that "the importation of arms and ammunition into Koweit and the territory under my control, and the exportation of the same are absolutely prohibited," and that "all arms and ammunition imported into any parts of Koweit territory, or exported therefrom, in future will be seized and confiscated;" (2) a Proclamation conferring on British and Persian vessels of war the right to search, in Koweit territorial waters, vessels carrying the British, Persian, or Koweit flag, as well as Koweit vessels in Indian and Persian waters; and to confiscate any arms and ammunition destined for Indian, Persian or Koweit ports.

In spite of the above Notification little serious attempt has been made to check the import of arms into Koweit. In April 1904, at a time when tribal warfare was in

Viceroy's telegram of February 13, 1908.

Government of India's letter of July 7, 1898.

Government of India's letter of May 31, 1906.

Major Cox to Government of India, December 2, 1906.

Government of India's letter of July 5, 1900.

Viceroy's telegram of May 29, 1904.

* See pp. 14, 15 of Foreign Office Memorandum of the 12th February, 1908.

full progress in the interior of Arabia, the Government of India pointed out that no arrangements had as yet been made with the Porte for the combined suppression of the traffic, and that the importation of arms was proceeding briskly. In view of the support rendered by the Turks to Bin Rashid, Amir of Nejd, one of the warring Chiefs of the interior, the Government of India were anxious that no additional check should be imposed on the arms traffic at Koweit, which afforded the main source of supply to the rival Chieftain, Bin Saoud, Amir of the Wahabi. It was explained that this did not involve authorizing the Sheikh of Koweit to import arms, or even relaxing measures actually in force, but merely letting matters remain as they were. His Majesty's Government accepted this view, and the Government of India were informed on the 24th June, 1904, that fresh measures for the prevention of the importation of arms at Koweit would for the present be deferred.

Mr. Brod-
rick to
Govern-
ment of
India,
June 24,
1904.

Major
Knox to
Govern-
ment of
India,
May 7,
1907.

Major Knox
to Govern-
ment of
India,
August 19,
1906.

The latest reports of the Political Agent at Koweit show that a large and increasing traffic in arms is being carried on at that port. Major Knox, in his Trade Report for 1906-7, drew attention to the large increase during the year in the value of the arms imported in country sailing-boats, and remarked that "the well-known dislike of the British authorities to this traffic, while it has had no effect in checking the import of arms and ammunition, has had the very unfortunate result of losing to a British Company (the British India Steam Navigation Company) the freight on 13 lakhs worth of goods."

Major Knox found it necessary in May 1906 to remind Sheikh Mubarak formally of his Arms Prohibition of 1900, and to request that it might be more strictly enforced. The Sheikh did not take the reminder in good part, and the Resident in the Persian Gulf gave his opinion that the question was one which might at any time endanger the good relations between the Sheikh and the Political Agent. Major Knox put the case still more strongly in a letter to the Resident. "The Proclamation," he wrote on the 3rd July, 1906, "is not worth the paper it is written on, and is only a cause of friction."

4. *Trucial Chiefs*.—At the close of 1902 the Trucial Chiefs entered into engagements respecting the arms traffic, similar to those of the Sheikhs of Bahrein and Koweit.

5. *Turkey*.—The importation of arms and munitions of war of all kinds into Turkey was prohibited by an Imperial Decree which was notified to the British Embassy in February 1862. The orders issued under this Decree to the custom-house authorities were communicated to the British Embassy by the Ottoman Government on the 14th February, 1863. They forbade absolutely the import into any part of the Ottoman Empire of all arms and ammunition, except "les armes de chasse et de luxe, les armes blanches, tels que sabres, épées et couteaux, et la poudre de chasse en petite quantité, destinés à l'usage privé"; and stated that all contraband articles would be confiscated by the State.

On the 4th October, 1893, the Porte made a fresh communication to the Powers, inclosing the Regulations which had been accepted in the Turco-German Commercial Treaty just then concluded, and notifying them as those in force. The acceptance of these Regulations was not at the time considered opportune by Great Britain and the other Powers, but it would seem that, nevertheless, the Turkish Government continued to regard the Regulations as those in force in the Ottoman dominions.

In their despatch of the 30th July, 1903, the Government of India recommended that an endeavour should be made to come to an arrangement with Turkey permitting vessels under the Turkish flag to be searched for arms by British ships of war, or, failing this, that the Porte should be asked to notify formally to His Majesty's Government that the importation of arms into Ottoman dominions without special licence was prohibited.

Sir N. O'Connor, who was consulted on the matter, drew attention to the notifications that had already been made by the Turkish Government, and suggested that they might sufficiently serve the purpose the Government of India had in view. As regards the right of search, Sir N. O'Connor wrote:—"In conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I gathered that the Turkish Government would be willing enough to co-operate in our endeavours to suppress the traffic in arms, but that the right to search Turkish vessels could only be conceded in exchange for a reciprocal privilege; an arrangement which, however one-sided it might prove in practice, would, in principle, be open to obvious objections."

Govern-
ment of
India's
letter of
July 30,
1903.

Sir N.
O'Connor
to Lord
Lans-
downe,
November
16, 1903.

6. *Persia*.—In 1881 the Persian Government issued a Decree that "no arms or munitions of war, such as guns, caps, gunpowder, &c., should enter Persian territory without the permission of the Great Government." In announcing the issue of this Decree to the British Legation, the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote as follows on the 3rd July, 1881: "Since the right of purchasing arms and introducing the same into Persia belongs to the Persian Government, who exercise it through their own specially appointed officials, and if this absolute right were not exclusively confined to the Government, and everybody who thought fit to do so were allowed to purchase such articles and introduce them into the country, this great governmental privilege would become obsolete, and considerable evils would result to the State. Therefore His Majesty the Shah has issued orders that no one shall import arms of any description whatsoever into this country from abroad, and any person in whose possession arms of foreign make are found will be liable to have them confiscated by Government."

As regards the measures taken by the Persian authorities to enforce the Decree of 1881, it may be noted that in May 1881 both the Shah himself and the Amin-es-Sultan telegraphed to the Governor of Bushire complaining of the sale in Tehran of arms by British and Parsee merchants, and giving strict orders that the prohibition on imports should be maintained, and all arms imported should be confiscated. In the year 1893 the local authorities seized seventeen cases of arms consigned to a Muscat firm, which were landed at Bushire for transshipment, on the ground that complaints had been received from the Turkish Government of arms being smuggled from Persian territory. The goods were confiscated. In the year 1895 the British steamer "Zulu" landed by mistake at the Bushire custom-house several cases of arms consigned to Muscat; these were seized by the local authorities. In January 1897, while the "Zulu" case was still pending, the first preventive officer was appointed at Bushire by the Persian Government.

Apart from these incidents, there is nothing to show that effective measures were taken to prevent the smuggling of arms, and on the 15th April, 1896, Sir M. Durand, in a despatch to Lord Salisbury, admitted that there could be "little doubt that a considerable illicit import of arms into Persia is being carried on, and that European firms are not wholly unconcerned in it."

At the close of 1897, as a result of British pressure, the Persian Government agreed that "in addition to such measures as may be taken by Persian officials, Her Majesty's ships should examine and search all merchant-vessels trading in the Persian Gulf, and confiscate and hand over to the Persian Government all prohibited arms found on board." The Grand Vizier's note of the 18th December, 1897, in which this Agreement was embodied, further stated that the Persian Government was ready "to join with Her Majesty's Government in requesting the Sultan of Muscat to notify in the ports and territories of Muscat that arms should not be imported from that side into Persia or Hindustan, also that English ships should exercise in regard to search and confiscation the same rights in Muscat as in Persian waters."

The joint representations to the Sultan were successful, and it was owing to the conclusion of an Agreement with Muscat that Her Majesty's ship "Lapwing" was able, on the 24th January, 1898, to seize the steamer "Baluchistan," near Muscat, and capture the cargo of arms she was carrying. An action was brought by Messrs. Francis, Times and Co., who had shipped a consignment of arms by the "Baluchistan," against the Sea Insurance Company, Limited, to recover a loss under a policy of marine insurance on the consignment. This loss the Company had refused to pay on two grounds:—(1) That the plaintiffs had, when effecting the insurance, concealed a fact material to the estimation of the risk, viz., that the importation of arms was forbidden by Persian law; and (2) that the adventure was illegal, as being in contravention to the law of nations. Mr. Justice Bigham, in giving judgment for the plaintiffs, held that "the import of arms was not illegal according to the law of Persia, as that law was administered in practice and enjoined," or, in other words, that no real prohibition existed on the importation of arms into Persian ports. As regards the legality of the act of seizure, the question was determined by the further action brought by Messrs. Francis, Times and Co. against Captain Carr, R.N., the officer who had seized the "Baluchistan," for wrongful deprivation of property. Mr. Justice Grantham, who tried the case in the first instance, found for the defendant, and his judgment, after being reversed by the Court of Appeal, was finally upheld by the House of Lords, on the ground that the seizure had taken

Mr. Thom-
son to
Lord
Granville,
July 12,
1881.

Sir M.
Durand to
Lord
Salisbury,
June 16,
1898.

Sir M.
Durand to
Lord
Salisbury,
April 15,
1896.

Mr. C.
Hardinge,
to Lord
Salisbury,
January
5, 1898.

"Times"
Law
Reports,
July 5,
1898, and
July 9,
1901.

place in Muscat territorial waters, and was, under the Sultan's Proclamation of January 1898, justifiable according to the law of Muscat.

Mr. Spring-
Rice to
Lord
Salisbury,
May 28,
1900.

On the 1st January, 1900, the Shah promulgated a law reaffirming the prohibition against the importation into Persia of arms and ammunition, as well as various other commodities. The case of the British steamer "Hathor," on board of which arms were seized at Bushire in November 1900, led to an Order in Council being issued, on the recommendation of the Law Officers of the Crown, by which the Persian Law of the 1st January, 1900, was made applicable to British subjects, in so far as the provisions respecting arms and ammunition were concerned.

Mr. Grant
Duff to
Govern-
ment
of India,
July 25,
1906.

It may be said generally that the efforts of the Persian authorities to put down the traffic have been quite ineffectual. "Possibly," wrote Mr. Grant Duff in July 1906, "when M. Naus has received the launches, now building for the Persian Government at Bombay" (since supplied) "something may be done by the Belgian officials to check the arms traffic. But there is no present likelihood of the Persian Government taking the slightest trouble to put an end to it. Even if they desired to do so, I doubt if they have the power."

The Government of India have done their best to check the trade at the Persian ports. In 1900 a Vice-Consul was appointed to Bander Abbas, where "it was hoped that the presence of a British officer might lead to the display of greater vigour in the repression of the illicit importation of arms along the neighbouring portions of the Persian coast." In 1902 measures were concerted with the Persian Governor-General of Mekran to prevent the importation of arms into Persian Baluchistan, and to impose restrictions on their possession in that province. A further Conference on the subject took place between the Persian officials on the Mekran border and the British frontier officers in 1906, and the desire to cope with the illegal traffic in arms was one of the reasons which led, in the same year, to the temporary appointment of Lieutenant G. D. Ogilvie as Vice-Consul at Bam.

But the nature of the country is such that, once the consignments are landed and clear of the coast, it is virtually impossible to catch the caravans conveying them into the interior. This view is confirmed by the Report furnished by Lieutenant Ogilvie, who travelled through Persian Baluchistan in June 1906 on his way to take up his duties at Bam. He said that the local Persian authorities were quite incapable of dealing with the traffic, and that the Afghans employed in smuggling arms up country from the coast were invariably well armed, and could overcome any opposition offered to them with the greatest ease; and he explained in a later Report that "the communications in Baluchistan are so unspeakably bad that large caravans, when once they have left the coast, can travel without any fear of interference, even if such interference were contemplated by the authorities, and with the utmost secrecy." It may be added that the Sirdars of Persian Baluchistan are not beyond the suspicion of having a pecuniary interest in the trade.

As recently as November 1907 further measures were introduced by the Government of India, at the suggestion of Mr. New, of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, for dealing with the arms traffic on the Mekran coast. These measures included the creation of a small corps of camel *sowars* to patrol the coast between Jask and Chahbar, in order to collect information about the movements of Afghans, expected consignments of arms, &c., which they will communicate without delay to British ships engaged in the suppression of the trade.

How far these measures will be successful remains to be seen. For the present the situation may be summarized in the words used by the Government of India in their despatch of the 21st February, 1907. "We regard it as certain," they wrote, "that effective action for the suppression of the arms trade cannot be taken by the Persian authorities. On the coast, the Belgian Customs officials are few in number, and although, perhaps, willing to give assistance for the suppression of the traffic, they have not the means at their disposal really to take efficient measures to deal with the evil. Inland, as is well known, the Persian authorities are powerless outside the towns, and large caravans can travel by unfrequented routes without the slightest risk of interference."

Govern-
ment of
India's
letter of
February
21, 1907.

II.—Quarantine.

(Communicated by the India Office.)

A.

"The sanitary defence of the Persian Gulf," wrote Dr. Theodore Thomson in his Report of the 12th July, 1906, "has in the past received, and still continues to receive, considerable attention, not only in the interests of countries adjacent thereto, but also because it is maintained by some authorities that cholera and plague are particularly likely to invade these regions by reason of their nearness to, and frequent communication with, India, and thence to extend over-land to Europe. This view was voiced by M. Barrère, one of the French Delegates at the International Sanitary Conference of 1897, when he classified the Persian Gulf, along with the Red Sea, as the '*routes naturelles des maladies pestilentielles*.' In relation with this aspect of the matter the question of what measures should be adopted with a view to guarding against the suggested danger to Europe was discussed at the International Sanitary Conferences of 1894, 1897, and 1903; and in each of the Conventions drawn up at these Conferences clauses were incorporated embodying measures intended to secure this end."

Stated briefly, the Regulations framed under the Paris Convention of 1894, which had special reference to cholera, have in the main been a dead letter. The Regulations contemplated the establishment of a number of sanitary stations, under the control of the Turkish authorities, in the Persian Gulf, and the enforcement of quarantine against arrivals. The British Government, in adhering to the Convention, refused to accept the Appendix containing the Persian Gulf Regulations, on the grounds (1) that the posts were unnecessary; (2) that Turkey and Persia were too far off to maintain effective control; and (3) that the great expense entailed in establishing the ports would fall chiefly on British shipping, which formed 98 per cent. of the shipping in the Gulf. The scheme was not carried out.

When plague appeared in India in 1896 the Constantinople Board of Health* discussed at great length and on repeated occasions the question of new ports and the régime to be applied in the Gulf ports. It was ultimately decided to establish a permanent port at Fao, and to repulse plague-infected ships from Bussorah. A Commission was sent to Fao to select a site, but nothing further was done, and Fao remained a sanitary office with no lazaret and no sanitary apparatus.

In the Venice Sanitary Convention of 1897 provision was made simply for a sanitary station near Bussorah and another at or in the neighbourhood of the Island of Ormuz or of Kishm, near the entrance of the Gulf, these stations to be under the control of the Constantinople Board of Health. The establishment of the Ormuz station was to be subject to an agreement between Turkey and Persia. The Indian authorities objected to the proposed station at Ormuz on political grounds, holding that it would give the maritime control of the Persian Gulf to Turkey, and might become a means of harassing British shipping. The proposals were, however, accepted by the British Government, and Persia also ratified the Convention, subject to the reservation that the station at the entrance of the Gulf should be under the Persian flag and should have Persian guards. The provisions of the Venice Convention, in so far as they relate to the Persian Gulf, have remained, like those of the 1894 Convention, a dead letter. No lazaret was established at the entrance of the Gulf, and the Bussorah lazaret remained, to quote the words of Dr. Clemow, "the sole and very imperfect quarantine station in those regions."

The Paris Sanitary Convention of 1903, which was ratified in April 1907, provides for the Bussorah station as before, and for a sanitary station at Ormuz, both to be under the control of the Constantinople Board of Health. The Convention was signed by the British Delegates, subject to reservations which, it was hoped, would result in the abandonment of the Ormuz scheme. These reservations were (1) that the establishment of the Ormuz station should be deferred until the Board of Health

* This is a body of international composition, Great Britain being represented on it by Dr. F. G. Clemow, Physician to His Majesty's Embassy at Constantinople. Dr. Dickson, Dr. Clemow's predecessor, Physician to the British Embassy, thus described the Board in January 1898: "Notwithstanding its nominal international character, the Board is in reality a Turkish Department, guided by the real or pretended will of the Sultan, and administered by its Turkish members;" and the British Government has always consistently maintained the view that the Board "is not independent of the Turkish Government, . . . and that the Porte is responsible for all measures adopted on its advice."

had been reformed in the manner provided by the Convention; (2) that nothing should be done to carry out the scheme until the Mixed Commission, on which we, with other European Powers are represented, should have *unanimously* voted the necessary funds. Doubts were at the same time expressed by His Majesty's Government, through the British Delegates, as to the necessity for a station near the entrance of the Gulf, which was not proved by the experience of recent years, and as to the suitability of Ormuz, with its unhealthy climate, as a site for the purpose proposed.

The Persian Government made a further proposal, in the form of a *Déclaration Additionnelle* to the Paris Convention, that the station at the mouth of the Gulf should be controlled by Persia, and should be placed on the Island of Henjam instead of Ormuz.

In this connection Dr. Faivre was sent by the French Government in the early part of 1905 to the Persian Gulf, to ascertain and report whether the Island of Henjam would or would not be more suitable as a site for a "sentinel" station near the entrance of the Gulf than the Island of Ormuz. He reported in September 1905. Stated briefly, his recommendations, which went beyond the terms of his reference and dealt with the whole question of the sanitary defence of the Gulf, were as follows:—

1. That lazarets should be established at Henjam and Fao, to be controlled respectively by the Persian Government and by the Constantinople Board of Health; and
2. That sanitary stations for purposes of "observation" should be erected at Bunder Abbas, Lingah, Bushire, and Mohammerah, under the control of the Persian Government, and at Bussorah, Koweit, Bahrein, Debai, and Muscat, under the control of the Constantinople Board of Health.

Dr. Faivre's Report did not reach His Majesty's Government until December 1906. In the meanwhile it had been decided in November 1905 that Dr. Theodore Thomson, of the Local Government Board, should visit the Persian Gulf on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and report "on the sanitary requirements of those regions in respect, not only of Persia, but also of Europe, as well as on the question of the need of a sanitary station and the suitability of Ormuz, Henjam, or other sites for the purpose." The Government of India, who were consulted as to the proposal, agreed that it might be advantageous at any future discussions for the British Government to have at its disposal expert information independent of that collected by Dr. Faivre, but expressed the earnest hope that "British opposition to establishment of sanitary station will be uncompromisingly maintained." It may here be noted that the objections of the British Government to the establishment of an international sanitary station in the Persian Gulf, as classified by the Foreign Office in April 1906, are (1) political, in so far as the station would introduce a certain amount of international control in a sphere of British influence; (2) commercial, as placing within the reach of other Powers a ready means of hampering and restricting the shipping trade with Bombay and Kurrachee, against which a fair pretext for quarantine can always be found, and through which the bulk of English as well as the whole of Indian trade with Persia; (3) sanitary, it being considered that the proposed station, far from acting as a check upon disease, would serve rather to spread that insalubrity which it would be destined to prevent, by subjecting the crews and passengers on the vessels detained, the large majority of which would be British, to the dangers of a pernicious climate and unhealthy surroundings.

Dr. Thomson left for India, on his way to the Gulf, in January 1906. His Report, which will be discussed hereafter, was submitted in the following July.

The terms of the Persian "Declaration Additionnelle" to the 1903 Convention (viz. (1) that the station to be established at the entrance of the Gulf in accordance with the Venice Convention of 1897 should be under Persian, and not international, control; and (2) that it should be placed on the Island of Henjam, and not Ormuz) were communicated by the French Government to the British Ambassador at Paris in December 1905, with an intimation that the Persian proposals were favourably viewed by them. These proposals did not commend themselves to the British Government, partly on the ground that any such arrangement would defeat the object of the British reserves, viz., the postponement of the scheme for a station at the entrance of the Gulf, and partly because they doubted the ability of the Persian

authorities to provide the necessary funds for the purpose.* In regard to this latter point, Mr. Grant Duff, writing from Tehran on the 15th November, 1905, said that he did not think "there is the slightest prospect of the provisions of the Convention, or any other sanitary measures, being carried out, except in those ports where the quarantine arrangements are under European control, so long as Persia remains under its present Government." The French Government, however, continued to press the point, and in support of the Persian proposals stated that Dr. Faivre (whose Report His Majesty's Government had not yet seen) had pronounced in favour of Henjam, the island chosen by the Persian Government, as being a suitable position for the station, while, at the same time, they pointed out that it would be difficult for them to explain to Persia that one of the reasons for which Great Britain had decided not to accept the Persian proposal was the incapacity of the Persian Treasury to bear the expenses. It was also urged that, if the Persian offer were declined, Persia might refuse to ratify the Paris Convention or make her ratification conditional on reserves, which would cause still further delay in bringing the Convention into operation.

At this stage of the discussion Dr. Thomson's Report reached the hands of His Majesty's Government in July 1906. Its general conclusions were opposed to the creation of a sanitary station at the entrance to the Gulf, (1) because it still remained to be proved that epidemics had been conveyed to Europe by that route; (2) because a sanitary station at that point would be ineffective, inasmuch as it would be evaded by native sailing craft, the most dangerous class of shipping; and (3) because no suitable position could be found for such a station, Henjam, though upon the whole the most suitable site in other respects, being open to serious objections on account of its climate, its inadequate water supply, and its lack of provisions.

Dr. Thomson's own recommendations were summarized as follows at the close of his Report:—

"In substance, therefore, the scheme best adapted, in the circumstances, to secure a reasonable degree of protection to Europe and the minimum of interference with commercial interests in the Gulf of Persia consists in the perfecting of the present sanitary stations at Mohammerah and Bushire,† the establishment of a sanitary station at Koweit, and the creation of a new station in place of that now existing at Bussorah. Sanitary defence of the Gulf based on these lines will afford a greater degree of protection to Europe against plague and cholera than would be secured by a 'sentinel station' near the entrance of the Gulf, combined with a terminal station at Bussorah, and will not impose on shipping the unnecessary and prejudicial restrictions that would result from the latter scheme.

"If this view should meet with acceptance, I would urge that steps should be taken to put the scheme I have suggested in operation with all possible speed. I view the alternative 'sentinel station' project with apprehension, as calculated to be ineffective, expensive, and gravely detrimental to commercial interests—and these are mainly British—in the Gulf. Abandonment of this 'sentinel station' project is much more likely to follow on knowledge that defensive measures, of the kind and at the places I have indicated, are in actual operation than on mere announcement that such measures are in contemplation."

Dr. Thomson's views as to the "sentinel station" were adopted by His Majesty's Government, and the French Government were informed that the Persian proposals were unacceptable, a decision which was in due course communicated to Persia and to the other parties to the Convention.

Sir C. Spring-Rice at the end of 1906 explained the position to Dr. Schneider, President of the Tehran Sanitary Council,‡ who promised to do his best to prevent the question being again raised. Dr. Schneider observed, however, that it would greatly facilitate his task, should the matter be brought before the Sanitary Council, if the Government of India would consent to improve the conditions under which quarantine measures were at present carried out in the Gulf, i.e., by increasing the European personnel and by supplying disinfection stoves and rat-destroying apparatus at each of the five ports (viz., Mohammerah, Bushire, Lingah, Bunder Abbas, and Jask), instead of at Bushire only. Dr. Schneider added that the Persian Government had not the necessary funds at their disposal, and that the expense would necessarily fall on the Indian Government.

* In his despatch of the 27th April, 1906, to Sir F. Bertie, Sir E. Grey wrote: "The unsatisfactory state of Persian finances makes it hard to believe that that country would be ready to incur the necessary expenditure, and it would seem clearly indicated that she is relying on outside assistance, and that the scheme may be said to have originated rather in St. Petersburg than in Tehran."

† Dr. Thomson further considered that there would "be advantage to commerce in also fully equipping the sanitary station at Bunder Abbas."

‡ This body was instituted by the Shah in 1904 as a result of the cholera panic. It comprises the European physicians of the Shah as well as several Legation physicians and Persian doctors. Its functions are purely advisory, and it has neither funds nor executive of any sort under its control.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir E. Grey, December 3, 1906.
Mr. Brodric to Government of India, September 8, 1905.
Viceroy's telegram of November 6, 1905.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, January 1, 1907.

B.

It will be convenient at this stage to give a brief account of the quarantine system hitherto administered in the Persian Gulf by officers of the Indian Government. In September 1904 Major Cox, after examining the old records regarding the sanitary control in the Persian Gulf, reported that "since 1864, and probably before, it has been entirely in our hands; but our control seems to have come into existence automatically, and I can trace no original arrangements with the Persian Government." The appearance of plague at Bombay in the autumn of 1896 rendered it imperative to adopt quarantine precautions in the Gulf. The resources of the Persian Government were unequal to the inauguration of adequate measures, and the task was, with the consent and at the desire of the Persian Government, undertaken by the British Residency at Bushire. After some difficulty, quarantine was placed on satisfactory and efficient footing at Bunder Abbas, Lingah, and Mohammerah, for which the services of assistant surgeons were lent by the Government of India, as well as at Bushire.

In August 1903 the Government of India reported that three assistant surgeons were employed exclusively on quarantine duties at Mohammerah, Bunder Abbas, and Lingah, while at Bushire and Jask the duty was done by the assistant surgeons attached to the Residency and the telegraph station respectively. The cost of the quarantine establishment at the first three ports, estimated at 1,450 rupees a-month (1,184*l.* per annum) was borne by the Persian Government, while a charge of about 340 rupees a-month (272*l.* per annum) fell upon Indian revenues in respect of the quarantine duties discharged by the doctors at Jask and Bushire. The assistant surgeons were placed under the immediate orders of the Residency Surgeon at Bushire, who was in the executive charge of the quarantine arrangements. Financially, control was vested in the Customs Administration, to whom all fees were made over by the quarantine officials.

Attempts have from time to time been made to undermine the position of the British Quarantine Administration. On the 6th August, 1903, Sir A. Hardinge telegraphed that the Russians were pressing the Persian Government to take the Gulf quarantine arrangements out of the hands of the British doctors and to place them under the Belgian Customs Department. Six days later the Government of India telegraphed that they had "positive proof" that the Persian Government intended to carry out this suggestion, and recommended that the "strongest protest should be made against a change so injurious to British interests," and that His Majesty's Government should resolutely resist the "principle that quarantine arrangements in the Gulf can be subverted, without our knowledge or consent, or that a body of foreigners can be put in expressly to hamper British trade, the tonnage of which is over 90 per cent. of the total." The Persian Government, on being approached by Sir A. Hardinge, disclaimed all intention of removing the British doctors; but the British Minister was informed by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs that certain complaints against the manner in which they administered the quarantine "had suggested to the Shah the idea that it might be advisable to establish some closer supervision over their work." The question was again raised in February 1904 by Colonel Kemball's complaints of interference by the Customs Department in the executive work of the quarantine. The Government of India recommended "that a vigorous protest should at once be made against the disturbance of existing sanitary arrangements," but Sir A. Hardinge preferred to reserve any strong remonstrance until we were confronted with some definite act of encroachment by the Persian Government itself. Further interference on the part of the Customs authorities, coupled with the activity of M. Bussière, a doctor in the employ of the Customs Department, and attached to the French Vice-Consulate, and also, as subsequently appeared, to the Russian Consulate, at Bushire, again raised the question in an acute form. Representations were made by Sir A. Hardinge to the Persian Government and to M. Naus, the Head of the Persian Customs, with the result that in September 1904 the Grand Vizier promised to send telegraphic orders to Bushire that the Custom-house officers should abstain from interfering in the quarantine administration of the Gulf ports. The actual text of the instructions sent to the Director-General of Customs, Bushire, was as follows: "You are to abstain as far as possible from all interference with quarantine. Recommend this especially to Bussière. At the same time this does not deprive you of the right to report to Tehran any steps by the quarantine officials which may be prejudicial to the Persian Government." The Grand Vizier told Sir A.

Major Cox to Government of India, September 5, 1904.

Persian Gulf Residency Administration Report, 1896-97.

Viceroy's telegrams of August 12 and 20, 1903.

Colonel Kemball to Government of India, February 3, 1904.

Sir A. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne, August 6, 1903. Viceroy's telegram of August 12, 1903.

Viceroy's telegram of March 19, 1904.

Sir A. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne, September 8, 1904.

Hardinge at the same time that he proposed to reopen the question on M. Naus' return from leave. Nothing further was done, however, and the settlement of the case remained for the time being undisturbed.

Arising out of these incidents, Sir A. Hardinge, in a despatch dated the 16th August, 1904, proposed that, in order to strengthen our position, the Government of India should decide "(1) itself to pay the salaries of the Indian doctors in the Gulf ports; and (2) to depute for these duties European rather than, as at present, native Indian assistant surgeons." The Government of India doubted the advantage of raising the former point, unless it was pressed by the Persian Government; they considered, moreover, that the "delegation of quarantine functions to British-paid officials seems to involve greater derogation from Shah's dignity than employment of British officers paid by Persian Government." The latter recommendation, however, was accepted, and the Government of India telegraphed, on the 31st December, 1904, that steps were being taken to provide "suitable Europeans to replace the present assistant surgeons at Mohammerah and Bunder Abbas as soon as possible," and that it was also proposed "to carry out a like change at other ports in the Persian Gulf if suitable men can be obtained." In March 1905 the Government of India were able to report that the necessary measures had been taken in regard to Mohammerah and Bunder Abbas, and that arrangements were being made for similar action in respect of the other ports.

During the year 1906 the question was again to the front. In the middle of September the Darya Begi, Governor of the Persian Gulf, wrote to the Residency Surgeon at Bushire, in his capacity as Chief Quarantine Officer for the Persian Gulf, informing him that the Persian Government would require the Persian flag, as well as the quarantine flag, to be flown, not only on all boats employed in quarantine work, but also on all ships undergoing quarantine in Persian ports. This step was believed to be the outcome of the action of the Russian Consul-General, who had informed the Darya Begi that Russian vessels would, in future, recognize no quarantine authority unless covered by the Persian flag, and that no correspondence would be carried on with the quarantine authorities in English, but only in Persian or French. A similar communication was made by the German Consul. Negotiations took place between the British Legation and the Persian Government, with the result that the latter tacitly dropped the requirement that ships in quarantine should fly the Persian flag, on finding that it was contrary to the general practice in other countries. They showed a disposition, however, to maintain their attitude as regards the flying of the Persian flag by boats engaged in quarantine duties.

In December 1906 the Russian ship "Trouvor" refused, on the advice of the Russian Consulate, to admit the quarantine officer on board at Bunder Abbas to carry out the inspection laid down by the Venice Convention. The same thing occurred at Lingah, but at Bushire the "Trouvor" fulfilled the usual formalities. The Russian Minister at Tehran at first attempted to argue that the conduct of M. Ovseenko, the Russian Consul at Bunder Abbas, was perfectly correct, but he finally agreed to send a telegram to M. Ovseenko enjoining a general compliance with the quarantine rules. Eventually it was settled between the British and Russian Ministers that the question should be disposed of by the Tehran Sanitary Council, and, on her return to Bunder Abbas the "Trouvor" accepted the inspection of the Sanitary Officer.

Further instances of interference on the part of M. Ovseenko occurred in March 1907, in connection with the British steamer "Madura" and the Russian steamer "Euphrates."

C.

In his despatch of the 1st January, 1907, reporting conversations with the President of the Tehran Sanitary Council, the British Minister at Tehran (Sir C. Spring-Rice) recommended that Dr. Schneider's suggestions for the increase of the European personnel and the improvement of the apparatus of the quarantine stations in the Gulf should be submitted to the Government of India for their consideration. These proposals, it may be noted, went somewhat beyond those made by Dr. Theodore Thomson in his Report of 12th July, 1906, inasmuch as Dr. Schneider contemplated improvements at all five of the Gulf ports, whereas Dr. Thomson's recommendations, so far as the coast of Persia was concerned,^{*} were limited to perfecting the existing sanitary stations at Mohammerah and Bushire, and possibly improving the station at Bunder Abbas.

* Dr. Thomson also proposed the establishment of a station at Koweit, on the Arabian side of the Gulf.

Sir A. Hardinge to Lord Lansdowne, August 16, 1904. Viceroy's telegram of October 27, 1904.

Sir C. Spring-Rice to Sir E. Grey, January 1, 1907.

Viceroy's
telegram of
February
6, 1907.

Sir C.
Spring-Rice
to Sir E.
Grey,
April 11
and 17,
1907.

The Government of India, in a telegram dated the 6th February, 1907, expressed their agreement with Dr. Thomson's recommendations, and their willingness "to bear, for the present, the cost of necessary preliminary measures, including supply of disaffecting apparatus at Gulf ports, reserving right of subsequent recovery from the Persian Government in case of Persian ports, and subject, in the case of Koweit, to acquiescence of Sheikh in proposed arrangement." In April 1907 the British Minister at Tehran telegraphed that an attack might shortly be anticipated upon our control of the quarantine in Southern Persia, and that he trusted that steps would be taken to secure the maintenance of existing arrangements. He subsequently explained that his apprehensions were based upon (1) the impending retirement of the President of the Tehran Sanitary Council, who was friendly to British interests, and the possibility of his being replaced by some one hostile; and (2) the frank hostility shown towards our quarantine officers both by the Russian Consul at Bunder Abbas and by the Belgian Customs officials. Sir C. Spring-Rice recommended, in addition to the improvements of the sanitary service on the lines indicated in his despatch of the 1st January, that a communication should be made to the Russian Government to the effect that, in view (1) of the predominance of British trade and shipping; (2) of the impossibility of securing an efficient Persian service; and (3) of the necessity for good administration, His Majesty's Government expected that the Russian Government would offer no objection to the continuance of the present system.

His Majesty's Government decided to postpone making any representations to the Russian Government until the estimates of the cost of the proposed improvements had been received from the Government of India.

The outbreak of plague at Bahrein in April 1907 brought into notice the deficiency in the disinfecting equipment of the southern ports, and lent additional urgency to the question of improving the sanitary defence of the Gulf.

With a despatch dated the 19th May, 1907, Sir C. Spring-Rice transmitted a Memorandum by Dr. Schneider, President of the Tehran Sanitary Council, on the measures he recommended for the improvement of the quarantine service. These measures included the appointment of commissioned officers of the medical service to all five ports, and the provision of a stove and Clayton apparatus (for destroying rats, &c.), as well as a reserve stove, at Bushire. Sir C. Spring-Rice added, in a telegram dated the 30th May, that the Sanitary Council, while strongly approving the measures proposed, did not possess the necessary personnel, appliances, or funds to carry out the scheme, and would be very grateful for the assistance of the Government of India. Sir C. Spring-Rice expressed himself strongly in favour of the proposed improvements being undertaken by the British Government, and in this view the Foreign Office concurred, the following statement of policy being made in Mr. Mallet's letter of the 21st June, 1907:—

Foreign
Office to
India Office,
June 21,
1907.

"During the eleven years in which the control of quarantine arrangements in the Gulf has been in British hands, the Government of India have spent large sums on the service, which would be entirely lost if any change in the control were now to be made; and Sir E. Grey entirely agrees with His Majesty's Minister in considering it of great importance, both politically and commercially, to endeavour to maintain the *status quo* by improving the efficiency of the medical service."

Sir C.
Spring-Rice
to Sir E.
Grey,
July 12,
1907.

In July 1907 the Sanitary Council reported in favour of an extended scheme of improvement including sanitary stations at Bunder Abbas, Bushire, Mohammerah, Jask, and Lingah, with a mobile service under a European doctor. The Russian representative on the Council proposed that the sanitary service should be in "strict collaboration with the Customs," who should use the five small steamers they had recently acquired; he also desired the appointment of the French doctor of the Russian Consulate at Bushire as Inspector-General. Representations were made to the Russian Government, on the 24th July, in which it was pointed out that His Majesty's Government considered "the present quarantine arrangements as one of their special interests in the Persian Gulf and a part of the *status quo*." On the 27th July the Russian Minister at Tehran assured Sir C. Spring-Rice that the proposal of the Russian doctor had been made without his knowledge, and that care would be taken to prevent the recurrence of a similar incident.

Mr. Morley
to Govern-
ment of
India,
November
7, 1907.

On the 7th November, 1907, the following measures were actually sanctioned by His Majesty's Government:—

1. The provision of four stoves at Jask, Bunder Abbas, Lingah, and Mohammerah, under the charge of the present assistant surgeons; and of one stove at Bahrein

under a military assistant surgeon, to be appointed on a salary of 208*l.* per annum. The initial cost of the five stoves was estimated at 1,250*l.*, and the annual recurring expenditure on them at about 333*l.*

2. The provision of a Clayton apparatus at Bushire, at an initial cost of 1,000*l.*

3. The appointment of a mobile assistant, of the Indian Medical Service, at Bushire, at a cost of 560*l.* per annum.

The total estimated cost was: 2,250*l.* initial; 1,100*l.* recurring.

On the 4th January, 1908, the purchase of a portable stove for the mobile assistant was sanctioned, at a maximum cost of 40*l.*

The whole of this expenditure is to be shared equally between the Indian and Imperial Exchequers.

The sanctioned strength of the Quarantine Establishment in the Persian Gulf thus works out as follows:—

At Bushire.

Paid by the British Government—

One Residency surgeon (in executive charge of the Quarantine Service).

One mobile assistant (of the Indian Medical Service).

One assistant surgeon (in sub-charge of Residency dispensary, stove, &c.).

At other Ports.

Paid by the Persian Government—

One assistant surgeon at Bunder Abbas.

" " Lingah.

" " Mohammerah.

Paid by the British Government—

One assistant surgeon at Bahrein.

" " Jask.*

At Koweit the assistant surgeon attached to the British Agency was empowered by the Sheikh in May 1907 to carry out the necessary measures for imposing quarantine on arrivals from Bahrein. Bahrein was declared free of plague in the following July.

III.—Question of British Consular Representation in El Hasa and Katif.

(Communicated by the India Office.)

The question of British Consular representation in El Hasa and Katif was raised by the Government of India in 1904. In a despatch dated the 31st March of that year, Lord Curzon's Government represented that the Indian merchants of Bahrein, trading with the mainland, were subjected to many vexatious restrictions by the Turkish Customs farmer, and that official regulations at the Katif custom-house had been so used as to destroy the British trade previously established at that place. It was pointed out, in illustration, that the Bania community of Katif had, in 1900, been reduced from one of 70 or 80 persons to a single trader, and, further, that those still desirous of carrying on trade at the port had, in the same year, expressed their willingness to pay, in advance, the cost of maintaining a British Agent to protect their interests on the spot. This request, it was added, was repeated during Lord Curzon's visit to the Persian Gulf in 1903,† when the British Indian merchants of Bahrein petitioned his Excellency for the appointment of a British Representative to protect their interests at Katif. The Government of India accordingly recommended (1) that the Political Agent at Bahrein should be appointed Vice-Consul for El Hasa, and (2) that a Native Consular Agent should be stationed at Katif.

Sir N. O'Connor, who was consulted, thought that these suggestions should not be pressed for the moment, and his view was accepted by His Majesty's Government.

* At Jask the quarantine duties are discharged by the assistant surgeon attached to the Eastern Telegraph Department station. He receives a special local allowance for the purpose.

† It was again repeated to Major Cox in July 1904, the merchants offering to pay a fee equivalent to 2,000 rupees per annum towards the cost of the appointment.

Government of
India's
letter of
March 31,
1904.

Sir N.
O'Connor to
Lord Lans-
downe,
June 28,
1904.

Mr. Brod-
rick to
Govern-
ment of
India,
August 5,
1904.

In communicating this decision to the Government of India, Mr. Brodric wrote as follows, in a despatch dated the 5th August, 1904:—"It will be seen that His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, . . . , having regard to the interpretation which the Turkish Government might place on the appointment of a Consular officer for El Hasa, and to the objection they would feel, at present, to recognizing such an officer, does not consider it advisable that effect should be given to the suggestion that the Political Officer at Bahrein should be invested with Vice-Consular jurisdiction over the Turkish district of El Hasa. For similar reasons, Sir N. O'Connor is of opinion that the present moment is unsuited for appointing a Native Consular Agent at Katif, and he suggests that the consideration of this proposal should be deferred till the result is seen of the representations which he has addressed to the Turkish Government, in regard to the grievances of the Indian traders, which formed the subject of the Government of India's letter of the 31st March, 1904. These views are approved by His Majesty's Government."

Mr. Town-
ley to
Lord Lans-
downe,
November
22, 1904.
Mr. Brod-
rick to
Govern-
ment of
India,
December
20, 1904.

In September 1904 the British Consul at Bussorah reported that the necessary instructions had been sent to the Mutessarif of Hasa, regarding the abatement of the excess duties at Katif, of which British Indians had complained; and Mr. Brodric informed the Government of India, on the 20th December, 1904, that he had intimated to the Foreign Office that, "if practical effect is given to these orders, it will be unnecessary to press for the appointment of a Consular Agent at Katif."

The question has not subsequently been raised.

IV.—Mohammerah.

Sheikh Khazal is the acknowledged Head of the Muhaisen tribe of the Chaab Arabs, living on both sides of the Karun, from near Shuster to its junction with the Shat-el-Arab near Mohammerah, and on the left bank of the Shat-el-Arab from Mohammerah to its mouth, and between the Tigris and the Shat-el-Arab to the west, and to the Jerrish River on the east.

Mr. Spring-
Rice,
No. 15,
March 20,
1900.

As regards the Persian Government, the position of the Sheikh, who murdered his brother, Sheikh Mizal, in 1897, has always been that of a great feudal Prince, who in smaller matters has thought it well to humour the Central Government while remaining at the same time extremely jealous in matters touching his quasi-independence.

His attitude to British interests has been friendly, and in striking contrast to that of the Persian officials in South-west Persia.

Ever since 1898 the Sheikh has shown himself nervous about his position in the event of the break-up of the Persian Empire, and anxious to obtain guarantees regarding the independence of his territories in certain eventualities.

In November 1899, when Sir M. Durand visited the Karun, the Sheikh made a request for assurances. While declining to afford guarantees of the nature desired, Sir M. Durand intimated to him that "he might rely upon our help whenever we could give it without ill-faith to the Persian Government."

The intention formed by the Central Government in 1900 to include Mohammerah in the newly organized Customs system increased the anxiety of the Sheikh to obtain some kind of guarantee, the more so since rumours were prevalent that the contemplated changes would be used as a pretext for putting an end to his power as that of the last of the great feudal Chiefs of Persia.

Fears were also entertained that if the Sheikh were forcibly to resist any such attempts the Persian Government would retaliate by their favourite method of intrigue, and endeavour to create dissension in the Chaab tribe by setting up the nephew of Sheikh Khazal, Sheikh Aboud, who resided at Ahwaz, and was not on the most cordial terms with his uncle.

In March 1900 a Memorandum was communicated to the Persian Government by Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires.

Mr. Spring-
Rice,
No. 17,
March 27,
1900.

In this paper it was stated that the British Consul-General at Bushire had recently called Lord Salisbury's attention to the state of affairs at Mohammerah. In order to avoid difficulties in the future his Lordship thought it best that there should be a clear understanding of his views as to the ports of Mohammerah, Bushire, and Bunder Abbas, and other ports of the Gulf.

The control of these ports by a foreign Power might lead to a state of things which Her Majesty's Government, in the interests of the Indian Empire, would be

bound to resist. This had been recognized by the Persian Government, who, on the 23rd October, 1897, gave a written promise that the customs of Southern Persia should never be placed under foreign control and supervision. Her Majesty's Government must hold the Persian Government to the strict observance of this engagement.

As the Persian Government were aware, far the larger part of the trade of the above-mentioned ports was British. This trade imposed certain duties upon Her Majesty's Government, and they could not pass without notice any measure likely to effect its position and prospects. It was from this point of view that the Marquess of Salisbury desired to inform the Persian Government that, in view of British interests in the trade of Mohammerah and in the navigation of the Karun, Her Majesty's Government must insist upon their right to be consulted before any change were made in the administration of the customs or in the position of the Sheikh. In claiming such a right of consultation, the Persian Government could have no doubt as to the anxiety of the British Government for the preservation of order, the maintenance of the Persian sovereignty, and the improvement of Persian resources. In all these the interests of Her Majesty's Government were second only to those of Persia herself.

The reply of the Persian Government was verbal:—

"Not only in Mohammerah, but in every part of Persia where British interests were concerned, the Persian Government, before taking any steps of importance, would consult the British Government, but Persia could not give a definite Agreement with regard to a special point of her territory, as such an Agreement might appear to others like a consent to partition."

Mr. Spring-
Rice,
No. 27,
April 5,
1900.

On the 10th May, 1900, Lord Salisbury addressed a despatch to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, in which he wrote as follows:—

"You should take any opportunity that may offer itself to explain that Her Majesty's Government have no desire to diminish, but rather seek to uphold and confirm, the authority of the Persian Government in the southern provinces, and that it is in the interest of Persia, as well as of Great Britain, that they endeavour to prevent the intrusion of other Powers."

The annexed extracts from a despatch, dated July 1901, from His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, show in some detail how the question of giving a British assurance to the Sheikh arose:—

"The Sheikh is evidently nervous about the designs of the Persian Government, and looks to us for assistance and protection."

"If a Russian Consul-General should come to Bushire the Sheikh may, should such support be withheld by us, be tempted to coquet with him, or at any rate to modify to some extent the friendly relations which he has hitherto cultivated with the British Resident at Bushire."

"It is undoubtedly important that he should continue to be our friend and to be guided by our advice, and I am therefore anxious to be able to give him such assurances of support as will prevent his looking for help elsewhere."

"I shall visit him in the course of the tour to the Persian Gulf ports which I hope to undertake next October, and I should be grateful if your Lordship would instruct me as to the language which I should hold to him in reply to the questions which he will almost certainly put to me in regard to possible difficulties between himself and the Persian Government."

"My idea is that we should endeavour to persuade him to come to a fair arrangement with the Persian Customs, as it is impossible that M. Naus, in reorganizing that service, can allow so important a port as Mohammerah to remain beyond his control, but that we should, in view of possible Russian activity in Southern Persia, attach him to ourselves by a promise that we will not let his political authority over his tribesmen be destroyed or undermined by the Persian Government."

"I am fully aware of the difficulty of supporting local quasi-hereditary Chiefs who are subjects of the Shah against endeavours by the Persian Government to weaken their positions and extend the power of the Central Government at their expense. Seistan is a case in point."

"At the same time our neglect or reluctance to do this may be taken advantage of to the detriment of our interests by our rivals, and it is clear that Colonel Kemball thinks that some definite assurance of assistance in certain contingencies should be given to the Sheikh of Mohammerah."

"I would propose to urge him to be loyal to the Persian Government, to come, with the help and, if necessary, mediation of His Majesty's Vice-Consul, to an arrangement with the Customs which would indemnify him for the loss of their administration by himself, and to trust to us to protect him against any attempt from Tehran—in my opinion, a very improbable one—to diminish or encroach upon his authority as Chief over his people. If we give him an assurance that we shall so protect him, we ought to be prepared, in the unlikely contingency of such an attempt as I have suggested, to send a gun-boat to Mohammerah and to let the Persians know

Sir A.
Hardinge,
No. 118,
July 28,
1901.

that we shall not acquiesce without good reason to the deposition of the Sheikh, or in interference by the Governor-General of Arabistan in the internal affairs of his tribe.

"Your Lordship can, of course, judge better than I to what extent the grant of such an assurance is in accordance with the general policy of His Majesty's Government in Southern Persia, and how far it would be wise and safe to give it. It is clear that the Sheikh is, perhaps, unnecessarily anxious about his future, though no doubt he is more or less trying to bluff us into giving him pledges of support; but I would venture to submit that the time has come for us to decide how far we are prepared to back him up, should the Persian Government, perhaps at Russian instigation, determine to destroy him, so to speak, autonomous position, and what counsel Colonel Kemball and I should give him should he appeal to us, as he seems disposed to do, for our advice."

Sir A.
Hardinge,
No. 167,
December
5, 1902.

The upshot of this correspondence was that Sir A. Hardinge informed the Sheikh on the 7th December, 1902, under instructions from Lord Lansdowne, that "we shall protect Mohammerah against naval attack by a foreign Power, whatever pretext for such action may be alleged, and also, so long as you remain faithful to the Shah and act in accordance with our advice, shall continue to give you our good offices and support."

This assurance was really necessitated by the urgency of arriving at a solution of the question, as Sir A. Hardinge reported in March 1902 that the Russians had been making offers for over a year to reduce the Sheikh of Mohammerah to subjection by force, and that they had been pressing the Persian Government to adopt towards him an uncompromising attitude. The assurance was actually given after an Arrangement about the Customs had been concluded, largely owing to the friendly intervention of His Majesty's Government; but it was probably only in consequence of this assurance that the Sheikh consented to avoid friction and to make the new Arrangement work smoothly.

On the 24th December, 1903, Sir A. Hardinge addressed a note to the Sheikh confirming the assurance of 1902, and adding that he might rest assured of the support of the British Government so long as he on his side observed the conditions of the Arrangement made with the Persian Government.

Sir A.
Hardinge,
No. 65,
April 7,
1904,
Consul
McDonall,
No. 1,
August 25,
1904.

In 1904 a Russian decoration was conferred on the Sheikh and a Commercial Mission was sent to Mohammerah.

One of the principal reasons for avoiding a conflict between the Persian Government and the Sheikh of Mohammerah has been the fear that such an event would raise the much larger question of the Turco-Persian frontier dispute. Mohammerah and the surrounding district have always been a bone of contention between the Turks and the Persians, and only recently the Sheikh expressed his apprehensions to His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire in regard to recent developments at more northerly points of the frontier. The views of his Majesty's Government are explained in the subjoined despatches.

"Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

"(No. 21.)

"Sir,

"I have received your despatch No. 17 of the 28th ultimo, in which you forward telegraphic correspondence with His Majesty's Consul-General at Bushire relative to the apprehensions of the Sheikh of Mohammerah in regard to recent developments on the Turco-Persian frontier.

"I concur in your opinion that a gun-boat need not be sent to the Shatt-el-Arab under existing conditions, and I consider that when an attack appears more imminent the precise action to be taken by His Majesty's Government can be determined.

"It would, however, be advisable, in order to allay the Sheikh's apprehensions, to inform him that His Majesty's Government are fully alive to the situation, but that they do not anticipate Turkish aggression in the neighbourhood of Mohammerah, and you should instruct Major Cox accordingly."

"Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

"(No. 75.)

"Sir,

"I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, relative to the apprehensions of the Sheikh of Mohammerah in regard to recent developments on the Turco-Persian frontier.

"As you are aware, His Majesty's Government have been content to allow the Russian Government, as being more closely concerned, to take the lead in regard to making any proposals for arresting the Turkish encroachments so long as they are confined to the northern portion of the frontier; but it is desirable that your Excellency should clearly understand that the position would be materially altered if there were to be an advance of Ottoman troops to the south, more especially in the neighbourhood of Mohammerah. In this district His Majesty's Government are not prepared to recognize any other frontier than that laid down by the

mediating Commissioners in 1850, as indicated in red on the accompanying sketch map; and in this connection I may recall the admission made by the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs to Her Majesty's Ambassador on the 18th November, 1893, to the effect that 'the Turkish Government laid no claim whatever to Mohammerah.'

"Any disturbance of the *status quo* at Mohammerah would affect British interests, and might not improbably lead to the active intervention of His Majesty's Government, who have given the Sheikh certain assurances in regard to his territory.

"Your Excellency should accordingly instruct His Majesty's Consuls at Bagdad and Bussorah to furnish by telegraph early information of any aggressive designs in the district in question."

In January 1903 the British Consul-General at Bushire reported that the Sheikh was anxious that His Majesty's Government should guarantee himself and his own family as heirs in the enjoyment of their present position. Sir E. Grey considered that it would be advisable to maintain an attitude of reserve on this subject.

March 18, 1908.

India Office,
February
25, 1908.

[5953]

No. 380.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 85.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 18, 1908.

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 63 and 64 of the 2nd instant relative to proposed modifications in existing telegraphic arrangements in Persia consequent on the Anglo-Russian Convention of the 31st August last, I transmit to your Excellency herewith copies of correspondence between this Office, the India Office, and His Majesty's Legation at Tehran relative to the considerations which should be kept in view in making these changes, and the steps which it is desirable to take to carry them into effect.*

I have to instruct your Excellency to take an early opportunity of opening negotiations with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs with regard to these questions on the lines laid down below.

With respect to the exchange of the control over the Tehran-Meshed for that over the Khaf-Nasratabad line, the letter of the Government of India inclosed in the India Office letter of the 19th ultimo gives full details of the manner in which they would propose to effect the transaction, and I am fully in agreement with all their suggestions except their proposal that the matter should be settled informally between the two Governments without any reference to the Persian Government. This course would, I consider, be likely to produce an unfavourable impression on opinion in Persia so soon as the arrangement became known, and to inspire mistrust both of Great Britain and Russia, especially at the present moment, when jealousy of foreign interference is exceedingly active throughout the country.

Your Excellency will perceive that the Government of India express themselves in favour of the retention of British and Russian signallers at terminal stations; and the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department considers that the presence of British signallers at these stations is essential to the satisfactory transmission of English messages, and that the advantage derived therefrom therefore outweighs any possible drawback which might result from the presence of a corresponding number of Russian signallers. On the other hand, it is proposed to remove all British signallers from intermediate stations on the line controlled by Russia, and, correspondingly, all Russian signallers from similar stations on that controlled by Great Britain, since in that case the presence of British signallers is held to confer but slight advantages, while that of Russian signallers on intermediate stations on the Khaf-Nasratabad line is considered very undesirable. In spite, therefore, of the importance attached by His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed to the continued presence of a British signaller at Turbat-i-Haidari (see the copy of his letter to the Government of India inclosed in the India Office letter of the 25th February), the India Office are of opinion that His Majesty's Government are not in a position to press for his retention, and in this view I concur.

I also transmit to your Excellency herewith copy of a telegram from Mr. Marling, dated the 16th March,† setting forth the financial obligations now

* India Office, February 19; Government of India to India Office, January 16; 1. Note by Mr. Kirk, February 14; 2. Ditto, India Office, February 25, 1908. Major Sykes to Government of India, December 17, 1907. Note by Mr. Kirk, February 25; to Government of India Telegraphic, February 25; India Office, March 6; Government of India, Telegraphic, March 4; Mr. Marling, No. 27, February 14; India Office, March 11; Note by Mr. Kirk, March 5, 1908.

† No. 369.

discharged by the Russian and Persian Governments respectively in the management of the whole line from Meshed to Nasratabad.

In his second note inclosed in the India Office letter of the 19th February, Mr. Kirk expresses the opinion that the demand of the Russian Acting Consul at Birjand, reported in Mr. Marling's telegram No. 44 of the 13th ultimo, for a special and separate room wherein to instal a new tape instrument, should be resisted, and points out that this could be done on the ground that such an arrangement would constitute a violation of the *status quo*. Your Excellency has already, in accordance with the instructions conveyed in my telegram No. 64 of the 2nd instant, called upon the Russian Government for an explanation on this point, and as this may very well involve a withdrawal of the Acting Consul's demand, it seems better at present to take no action which may subsequently prove to have been superfluous. The matter, in any case, is not one which need prevent you from opening negotiations with the Russian Government on the general question, but it would be well to remind them of the request which has been conveyed to them, and to inform them that His Majesty's Government trust that it will receive attention at as early a date as possible.

Should it be agreed, as His Majesty's Government desire, that all signallers at intermediate stations are to be removed, the arrangement would of course apply to the Russian signaller at Birjand, and upon his removal the demand for a separate room there would fall to the ground of itself.

With reference to the cession of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line, Mr. Marling, in his despatch No. 27 of the 26th ultimo, refers to a suggestion made by the Russian Minister at Tehran, that these rights, now vested in the Indo-European Telegraph Department, should, when surrendered to Russia, be taken over on her behalf by the Indo-European Telegraph Company, which is under Russian protection, and, with reference to this suggestion, he reports a proposal made by the Local Manager of the Company that, should the cession take place, the Company, instead of taking over the existing wire, should construct a new line from Kaziru to Hamadan, and take over the existing wire from thence to Khanikin.

In Mr. Kirk's opinion, as expressed in his note, copy of which is inclosed in the India Office letter of the 11th instant, M. de Hartwig's suggestion, if carried into effect, would be advantageous to British interests. If, therefore, the Russian Government should put it forward, your Excellency should allow it to be understood that His Majesty's Government are favourably disposed towards it.

Mr. Kirk sees no objection to Mr. Casey's proposal, but this, as Mr. Marling observes, is a matter which concerns the Russian Government in their relations with the Indo-European Telegraph Company rather than with His Majesty's Government, so that your Excellency is not called upon to press it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[9334]

No. 381.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 18, 1908.

WITH reference to my letter of the 10th instant, relative to the proposed modifications in telegraph arrangements in Persia resulting from the Anglo-Russian Convention, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, reporting the concurrence of the Russian Government in the most recent proposals of His Majesty's Government with regard to this question.

Sir A. Nicolson states that he has not yet laid before the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs the suggestion jointly put forward by His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires and the Russian Minister at Tehran that the exchange of the Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad lines should be brought to the knowledge of the Persian Telegraph Department by the Indo-European Telegraph Department and the Russian Telegraph Superintendent if possible without the intervention of the two Legations, and he proposes to submit to M. Isvolsky the advisability of leaving to the Representatives on the spot the choice of a mode of approaching the Persian Government.

* No. 374.

Sir E. Grey is disposed to approve this suggestion of Sir A. Nicolson, which appears to him to be a simple and satisfactory solution of the question, but before taking any further action in the matter he would be glad to be favoured with the views of Mr. Secretary Morley with regard to it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[9460]

No. 382.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 19.)

Sir,

India Office, March 17, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 24th February, as to the appointment of a Military Attaché to His Majesty's Consulate-General at Meshed, I am desired to inclose, to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a Secret despatch from the Government of India in the Army Department on the subject.

Mr. Morley understands from your letter under reply that Sir E. Grey is not disposed to adhere to the view expressed in Sir E. Gorst's letter of the 11th February, 1905, that the appointment is "one of purely Indian interest." In view of the consensus of opinion in favour of maintaining the post, he will be prepared, if Sir E. Grey will accept the principle of an equal division of cost between the Indian and British exchequers, to approve the retention of Captain Smyth in the post till the 20th October, 1908, and the continuance of the appointment then for a period, say, of three years, the question of maintaining the post being reconsidered at the end of that time.

The cost per annum was stated in my letter of the 1st February, 1905, as amounting, according to the rank of the incumbent, to the rupee equivalent of the following sterling rates:—

For a Lieutenant, 574*l.* 8*s.*;
For a Captain, 700*l.*;
For a Major, 927*l.* 4*s.*;

with the addition in each case of a travelling allowance on the scale fixed for Political Officers stationed in Persia. If the present proposal is accepted, Mr. Morley will recommend to the Government of India that the pay of Captain Smyth's successor should not be higher than that of the Military Attaché at Tehran.

As regards the question of status, Mr. Morley sees advantages in leaving the appointment on its present somewhat undefined footing, rather than in placing it on the same footing as the Attachéship at Tehran. But on this point he will be glad to accept Sir E. Grey's opinion.

The favour of an early reply is requested, in view of the telegram from the Government of India of which a copy is inclosed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 382.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Secret.)

Sir,

Simla, November 7, 1907.

IN continuation of previous correspondence, ending with your telegram of the 6th April last, we had the honour to address you by telegram of the 2nd October, in which we recommended the retention of the appointment of the Military Attaché, Meshed, beyond the 20th October of this year. We have since received your telegram of the 4th October, and we note with satisfaction that you have been pleased to sanction Captain Smyth's retention at Meshed for a further period of six months, dating from the 20th instant, pending a decision on the whole question. In the present despatch we propose to lay before you in detail the reasons that have led us to make this recommendation, which embraces—

(a.) The conversion of the temporary appointment into a permanent one; and
(b.) The retention of the present incumbent, Captain Smyth, the Cheshire Regiment, for a period of one year to the 20th October, 1908.

[1563]

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2. We had hoped to address you at an earlier date on this subject, but, as it would necessarily be affected by the results of the recent negotiations with Russia, we considered it desirable to await the signature of the Conventions relating to Persia and Afghanistan when the situation thereby created would be clearer.

3. It will be seen from the inclosure to our Military despatch of the 1st December, 1904, in which the creation of this appointment was suggested, that Lord Kitchener considered it a necessity in order that a sound system of intelligence of events in Central Asia might be substituted for the conditions then obtaining, under which we were dependent chiefly on unreliable and untrained native agents, who, in too many cases, merely transmitted to Meshed the unsifted gossip of the various Central Asian bazaars.

4. The proposal was referred to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, who replied in his despatch No. 113 of the 22nd May, 1905, that the work of obtaining full, reliable, and early particulars of political events and military movements in Central Asia and on the Afghan frontiers required the concentrated and undivided attention of one man and could not be combined with the daily multifarious duties of the Agent and Consul-General at Meshed. Sir A. Hardinge consequently supported the proposal, but at first as a temporary measure until the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese war. In the meantime he proposed to visit Meshed, to make himself more fully acquainted with the nature of the work of the Military Attaché, and to consider the question on the spot.

5. On the 9th September, 1905, when the war had come to a close, Sir A. Hardinge, in his despatch No. 197, reported that his visit to Meshed had satisfied him that the work then devolving on Captain Smyth could not be properly performed by the Consul-General or the Indian Political Attaché. He therefore strongly recommended that the Military Attaché should be retained at Meshed until we had not only obtained from the Russian Government the recognition of a British Consul at Tashkent or elsewhere in Central Asia, but had also tested by practical experience the possibilities of obtaining through him all the political and military intelligence we require. In support of his recommendation he pointed out that for information regarding military matters in Central Asia the Government of India and the Intelligence Department must largely depend on news supplied from Meshed—a remark that applies with equal force at the present time—and he expressed the hope that, if the successful system evolved by Captain Smyth were allowed to develop, before long we should be in possession of early and ample information of every important event in Central Asia.

Since the date of that letter two years have elapsed, and the results attained in this interval have, in our opinion, justified Sir A. Hardinge's expectations.

6. Sir A. Hardinge's opinion of the importance of Meshed as a centre for the collection of military and political intelligence and of the consequent necessity for the retention there of the Military Attaché is shared by Sir C. Spring-Rice, whose concurrence was communicated to you in his Excellency the Viceroy's telegram of the 6th March last. In his despatch No. 122, dated the 12th June, 1907, to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir C. Spring-Rice has again urged the great importance of Meshed as a centre for the acquisition of such intelligence, and in his No. 161 of the 24th of the following month has renewed his recommendation that the Military Attaché at Meshed should be retained.

7. We would also invite attention to the opinions expressed on this subject by the Consul-General, Meshed.

In a letter of the 31st May last to the Government of India on the subject of the recent negotiations with Russia and their possible effects on the position of the Meshed Consulate-General, Major Sykes wrote: "... Under Captain Smyth a unique network of intelligence, embracing Transcaspia and Turkestan, has been woven. Possibly, too, in the near future this network may cover the provinces to the east. ... A third point is that the Consulate-General at Meshed watches Western Afghanistan and Herat. Consequently it would appear inadvisable, if only on this account, to weaken British prestige at the capital of Khorassan."

8. It will thus be seen that until last month the reasons which have influenced all concerned in urging that the Military Attachéship at Meshed should be made a permanency have been almost entirely of a military character. We have been much impressed by the strong consensus of opinion emanating from all in a position to speak with authority on this subject, but we think that the conclusion of the recent Convention with Russia must necessarily involve a reconsideration of the

matter in the light of the altered conditions. Hitherto the movements and preparations of Russia in Central Asia have had a very real influence on Indian matters, and there have been periods within recent years when the disturbing rumours which have reached us from Afghanistan and elsewhere regarding such preparations have caused considerable anxiety in India, an anxiety which tended, perhaps, to exaggeration chiefly because we were almost entirely without any reliable agency in Central Asia whereby we could learn the real truth. With the conclusion of the Convention recently signed, we may reasonably hope that the purely military arguments that have previously influenced our opinion on this subject will no longer carry the same weight, though at the same time we are convinced that we cannot prudently afford altogether to relinquish those elementary precautions as regards military intelligence which every civilized State has found from experience to be necessary.

9. It is now the avowed object of both Powers to maintain a solid and lasting peace throughout Central Asia. But we consider that this object may be jeopardized if we are to return to the former state of almost complete ignorance of what is passing in Central Asia and on the northern frontiers of Afghanistan. If we are to continue in the future to receive exaggerated bazaar rumours, or garbled Afghan versions, wholly unchecked by reports derived from trained and reliable agents, as to what is passing in Central Asia, it seems probable that the mutual suspicion and distrust which have unfortunately obtained in the past, and which it should now be our particular object to remove, may continue to exist. The closer relations between Russia and Afghanistan which may now be expected, consequent on the discussion of non-political matters between the local officials of the two countries, will require very careful watching, and may even give rise to some friction. In view of the distorted accounts of such incidents which we would be liable to receive from both parties, we consider that, from the point of view of making the recent Convention a success, it is most desirable that we should be in a position to receive direct and impartial information as to what is really happening. As we are placed at present, without any Consular or other Representative in the whole stretch of Russian territory from Baku to Kashgar, this can only be obtained by means of the Agency established by Captain Smyth from Meshed as a centre. Moreover, we have yet to see how the Amir takes the Convention with Russia regarding Afghanistan. This aspect also will require careful watching. Even should his attitude prove studiously correct, his control over the northern provinces of his kingdom is not yet so complete and assured as to make it certain that his local officers, far removed from the supervision of the capital, will carry out his instructions in the exact spirit in which they are given. The same holds true, to a certain extent, of the local Russian officials, if we are to judge from the examples of the past. In short, local incidents, liable to develop friction, are almost inevitable, and we regard it as essential that we should be placed in a position to know from other sources what the rights and wrongs of these really are.

10. In this connection we would invite attention to the second of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice's despatches quoted in paragraph 6 above, viz., No. 168 of the 24th July last. He points out that adequate information will prevent unnecessary scares such as that of 1900, when exaggerated rumours of the arrival of reinforcements in Russian Central Asia necessarily led in this country to serious alarm that could have been avoided, had there been a system of intelligence, such as Captain Smyth has now established, to determine the real extent and nature of these movements.

11. It will be seen that the views expressed by the Government of India in their despatches of the 1st December, 1904, and the 19th October, 1905, and now repeated, have been indorsed by the present Minister at Tehran, by his immediate predecessor, and by the Consul-General, Meshed. Nor have our Representatives in Persia been led by events subsequent to the Russo-Japanese war to consider the necessity for the retention of the Military Attaché at Meshed to be in any way less urgent.

In these circumstances we would ask that the decision conveyed in your telegram of the 25th February last may be reconsidered. The abolition of this appointment would, we apprehend, lead to a return to the same state of affairs as formerly existed, in which information could only be obtained in a perfunctory and incomplete manner. The valuable work of the last three years would be undone, and the organization established, if now destroyed, could be restored only after the expenditure of much time and labour.

12. We have so far dealt with sub-head (a) of paragraph 1 of this despatch.

Our second recommendation, that Captain Smyth should be retained in his present post until the 20th October, 1908, is based mainly on the desirability of maintaining

during the early stages of the *entente* the happy personal relations which this officer has succeeded in establishing with Captain Skouratt, the Russian Military Attaché, and M. de Klemme, the Russian Consul-General at Meshed, and with other Russian officers and officials in Central Asia.

This year Captain Skouratt invited Captain Smyth to accompany him to the manoeuvres of the 1st Turkestan Army Corps, and made the necessary application to the authorities at Tashkent; the request was supported by a private letter from M. de Klemme to the Political Agent at that town. Captain Skouratt's application, however, could not be granted, for, owing to the employment of half the troops in guarding the railways and towns against revolutionary outbreaks and outrages, none but minor manoeuvres were to take place this year.

Possibly the invitation may be renewed next year. It would be a matter for regret if we were not in a position to utilize such a favourable opportunity of establishing closer personal relations between the officers of the two armies and of thus removing the attitude of mutual suspicion and distrust which has unfortunately been characteristic of our dealings in the past. Incidentally, too, such an invitation should afford occasions for acquiring information of the progress in training, organization, and equipment made by the troops in Russian Turkestan since the war.

To the value of Captain Smyth's work Sir C. Spring-Rice has testified recently, in his despatch No. 28 of the 24th July, which transmitted to the Government of India his above-quoted despatch No. 168 of the same date.

13. Should our proposals meet with your approval, the question of the incidence of cost will remain for disposal. This was dealt with in our Military Department despatch of the 19th October, 1905.

We have, &c.
(Signed)

MINTO.
KITCHENER.
H. ERLE RICHARDS.
E. N. BAKER.
C. H. SCOTT.
H. ADAMSON.
J. F. FINLAY.
J. O. MILLER.

Inclosure 2 in No. 382.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.)

February 29, 1908.

WHEN may we expect a reply to our despatch No. 115, dated the 7th November last? War Office is pressing for information as to date on which Smyth can be absorbed into regiment.

[9462]

No. 383.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 19.)

Sir,

India Office, March 17, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 10th instant, inclosing a copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran as to the method of effecting the exchange of the Meshed-Seistan and Meshed-Tehran telegraph lines, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose a copy of a note on the subject by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

Mr. Morley concurs in the views expressed by Mr. Kirk, and, subject to Sir E. Grey's concurrence, is of opinion that the procedure suggested by Mr. Marling may be approved.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 383.

Note on Mr. Marling's Telegram No. 70 to Foreign Office, dated March 7, 1908.

THE British maintain the Tehran-Meshed line for the Persian Government under an informal arrangement, which either side can put an end to whenever it may desire to do so. The Russians maintain the Meshed-Seistan line on much the same conditions. When the question of the exchange of control over the lines is brought before the Persian Government, it is possible they may object to having any change made, or may decide that their own Telegraph Administration should maintain the lines. It has been reported that the feeling in the Persian National Assembly is at present strongly in favour of Persian affairs being managed by Persian officials. It is thought that the question of the transfer should therefore, if possible, be made a mere telegraph, and not a political matter, and to effect this, both the Russian Minister and Mr. Marling consider it should be raised by the British and Russian Telegraph Departments with the Persian Telegraph Administration, the Legations not moving in it unless it is found to be absolutely necessary. This procedure appears to be a sound one to adopt. If the question can be shown to be one of telegraph administration only, and is accepted as such by the Persian Government, it would without doubt be more readily settled in the way that we wish.

The British signallers on the Seistan line belong to the Indian Telegraph Department, and this is why Mr. Marling points out that the Indo-European Telegraph Department is not directly concerned in the transfer. He thinks this need not be an obstacle to the Indo-European Telegraph Department acting in the matter, and I think this may be agreed to. The Government of India are most anxious to get the control of the Seistan line into British hands, and are likely to accept any procedure that will bring this about.

The line Meshed to Tehran is 568, and the line Meshed to Seistan 523 miles long. The proposed arrangement is that the British should maintain the section from Khaf to Seistan only, Khaf being some 150 miles distant from Meshed. When this comes before the Persian Government, the inquiry seems likely to be made why the whole section is not to be taken over by the British, and it will be difficult to keep the political element out of the answer. It is quite possible that the Persian Government may have proposals of their own to make. However, by putting the question of the transfer forward as a telegraph matter, information will be obtained as to the view the Persian Government take of it, and it may be treated with less suspicion than if it had come before them from the two Legations. Mr. Marling's proposals might therefore be accepted as put forward by him in his telegram.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

March 9, 1908.

[9556]

No. 384.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 19.)

(No. 51.)

(Telegraphic.)

St. Petersburg, March 19, 1908.

YOUR telegram No. 64: Seistan telegraph.

Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that new instrument was dispatched long before Russian Minister at Tehran had given the instructions to repair line to Khaf only. The special room is to replace the station which was completely destroyed by the rains. The instrument will not be installed at Birjand, and no repairs will be effected by Russian employés on Khaf-Seistan section. It is nevertheless pointed out that unless the necessary repairs on the above-named section are effected in time there may be interruption of telegraphic communication, while, on the other hand, it is clearly impossible for the repairs to be executed by Indian Telegraph Department until the consent of the Persian Government has been obtained to the arrangement for the exchange of telegraph lines.

In these circumstances Russian Government are ready to agree to any measures which His Majesty's Government may propose to meet the above difficulties, and are ready to cede to His Majesty's Government by the 8th April instrument if the latter so desire.

(Sent to Tehran.)

[1563]

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[9303]

No. 385.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 62.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 19, 1908.

WITH reference to paragraphs Nos. 1 and 3 of your telegram No. 59 of the 27th ultimo.

Oil Syndicate desire to leave matter in your hands entirely. They are satisfied with your action and grateful for information supplied.

[9634]

No. 386.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 20.)

(No. 45.)

Sir,

Tehran, March 6, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of Memoranda exchanged by the Turkish and Persian Commissioners respecting the Treaties bearing on the question of the Turco-Persian frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CHARLES M. MARLING.

Inclosure 1 in No. 386.

Memorandum handed on the 26 Kanoun-i-Sani, 1323, by the Imperial Ottoman Commission of Inquiry to the Imperial Persian Frontier Commission of Azerbaijan.

(Translation.)

JUST as the settlement of boundaries between the private owners of real property depends on valid title-deeds, so, too, the tracing of the frontier of two Great Powers is defined by Treaties. Of the Treaties which I have by me, and which are sufficient to demonstrate the truth sought by the two parties, the first is the Treaty contracted in Shual 1049 in the time of the deceased Sultan Murad IV. At that time the frontier was defined in conformity with national distinctions, and accordingly assurance was given that the Persian Government would not interfere with the Kurds, who are ours.

Second, the Treaty made on the 17th Sefer, 1140, in the time of the deceased Sultan Ahmed III. In this it was decided that not only Kurdistan, but a number of towns now under the Administration of Persia should remain to us.

Third, the Treaty made in Jemadi-ul-Akhir, 1149, in the time of the deceased Sultan Mahmoud I. In this the frontier of Sultan Murad IV was confirmed.

Fourth, the Treaty made on the 17th Shaban, 1159, in the same reign. In this the frontier-line of the time of Sultan Murad IV was taken as the frontier.

Fifth, the Treaty made on the 9th Zilkadeh, 1238, in the time of the deceased Sultan Mahmoud II. In this also both the ancient frontier was confirmed, and Persia bound itself not to interfere with the Sanjak of Kurdistan. Further, it was inserted in the Treaty that those of the Haideranli and Sipeki tribes which, seduced by the late Abbas Mirza, had fought against us, who wished to go to Persia should not be prevented, such things being according to the rules which prevail regarding those who help the invading side in a country which is restored by Treaty.

Sixth, the Treaty made on the 16th of Jemadi-ul-Akhir, 1263, in the time of the deceased Sultan Abdul Mejid. In this also, while certain places were explicitly mentioned in the direction of Zohab, the force of ancient Treaties was maintained and confirmed.

Thus the interference of Persia, which has sometimes been manifested in the villages, nahiyehs, kazas, and livas of Kurdistan from Bayazid to the extreme frontier of the Sanjak of Suleimanieh, is based on no right, but is a presumptuous thing connected with the slowness of certain frontier officials opposed to Treaties and to the interests of limitrophe rules.

But it is well known that, though thus seduced and tempted, the tie which bound the Kurds to their former sovereign benefactor always existed, and that when somewhat hard pressed by you their senses returned to them, and they spoke the truth, and replied to your functionaries. Even were it possible to shut our eyes to such adroitness on the part of your frontier officials in the time of our Derebeys, there is now no need

for things which destroy the peace and quiet of the population of both sides, and just as by God's grace the neighbourhood of Urumia has this year been exempt from the incursions of the Kurds, so we expect, in the name of Islam and humanity, that no obstacle will be placed in the way of a period of prosperity to assure peace and security along this part of the frontier.

Inclosure 2 in No. 386.

Answer, dated 5 Muharrem, 1326, to the Memorandum dated 29 Zilhujeh, 1325, addressed by the Imperial Ottoman Commission to the Imperial Persian Commission.

(Translation.)

YOUR Excellency takes international Treaties as the basis for delimiting international frontiers. This is true, and it is incontestable that sacred Treaties should be the foundation for tracing frontiers, and they must be held in honour. But, in conformity with current principles and international law, every new Treaty annuls past Treaties, except regarding any item from the past Treaties, which is explicitly stated to be maintained in the new Treaty. Consequently, the basis of both Mussulman States for negotiating and for delimiting the frontier is the last Treaty, contracted on the 16th Jemadi-ul-Akhir, 1263.

There is no need for the Persian Commission to declare and explain that the existence of this Treaty rebuts or annuls or eliminates the various Treaties written in the Memorandum of the honourable Ottoman Commission. In the last Treaty made between the two Powers on the 16th Jemadi-ul-Akhir, 1263, the delimitation of the frontier is explicitly set forth, and if it is examined with the eye of equity, there is not the slightest room for doubt. After naming with precision and detail in the IInd Article certain things which the two Mussulman Powers cede to one another, it is clearly written in the IIIrd Article that "the Contracting Parties have by the present Treaty abandoned their other territorial claims." From these two Articles it is understood in a manifest manner that approved claims are exchanged in Article II, and that the two parties abandon their claim to the things which are not settled in Article II. It is possible that, relying under a mistaken impression on Article IX of this Treaty to prove the permanency of past Treaties, you brought this Article into discussion. To remove doubt I may say that if in a new Treaty the solution of a question or difference is explicitly set forth, no room is left for reverting to past Treaties. Article IX comprehends such questions as that of Van, of which mention is omitted in the new Treaty. Consequently, as the Ind and IIIrd Articles of this Treaty decided the questions of territorial and frontier claims, the IXth Article has no effect in this matter, especially seeing that in that Article it is clearly stated that "the force and provisions of all clauses and Articles in former Treaties, and especially of the Treaty concluded at Erzeroum in 1238, are maintained, excepting those modified or annulled by the present Treaty."

I have read the sentence in your Memorandum that "the interference of the Persian Government, which has at times been manifested in the villages, nahiyehs, kazas, and livas of Kurdistan from Bayazid to the extreme frontier of Suleimanieh, is based on no right," as well as the Appendix, which continues to the end of your Excellency's Memorandum. But even if, apart from possession (occupation) at the time the last Treaty was contracted, the occupation of any other period be proved, it cannot by any means have a legal and effective result, or be a pretext for founding a claim. For, as the IIIrd Article of the last Treaty annuls and abolishes all such claims and rights on both sides, both parties have explicitly undertaken to renounce such claims. However, if attention is to be paid to such vague and bygone claims, and both parties are at liberty to demand territory in each other's occupation, Persia can easily prove its past occupation in most of the territory and provinces now occupied by Turkey.

[9624]

No. 387.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 20.)

Sir,

India Office, March 19, 1908.

IN reply to your letter dated the 16th instant, inclosing copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran as to the subsidy of the German school at

that place, secured on the Persian customs revenues, I am directed to say that Mr. Secretary Morley concurs in the terms of the draft telegram which Secretary Sir E. Grey proposes to send to His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the subject, with a view to the protection of the existing British and Russian liens on those revenues.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[9660]

No. 388.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 20.)

Sir,

India Office, March 20, 1908.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 18th March last, inclosing copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg as to the transfer to Russia of the rights now enjoyed by Great Britain over the Tehran-Khanikin telegraph line, and the exchange between the two Governments of the Meshed-Tehran and the Khaf-Nasratabad lines.

In reply, I am to say that Mr. Morley concurs in the proposal of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to approve the suggestion of Sir A. Nicolson as to submitting to M. Isvolski the advisability of leaving to the Representatives on the spot the choice of a mode of approaching the Persian Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

[9624]

No. 389.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 83.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 20, 1908.

GERMAN school at Tehran.

Mr. Marling's telegram No. 76 of the 13th instant, respecting grant of subsidy.

We consider security on customs is a serious matter, because a pretext will thereby be afforded for interference in any future loan question in which the revenues from the customs may be proposed as security. Please inquire what view is taken by the Russian Government.

It is not easy to suggest what course can be adopted now, seeing that the Agreement is apparently already concluded. But the two Governments might jointly warn the Persian Government of the risk incurred by them by hypothecating their revenues before time has been allowed for the extent of their resources to be investigated by the Financial Adviser. And the Persian Government might be reminded of the lien possessed by the Russian and British Governments on the customs revenues.

[9252]

No. 390.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. G. Barclay.

(No. 56.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 20, 1908.

BUSSORAH and Persian ports will be visited by the Commander-in-chief, who is starting on the 4th April for the Persian Gulf.

[9556]

No. 391.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 64.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 20, 1908.

SEISTAN telegraph.

Solution of Birjand incident, contained in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 51 of the 19th March, appears to be satisfactory.

Terms of exchange will shortly be discussed by His Majesty's Ambassador with the Russian Government, and meantime there is no objection to necessary repairs being carried out by us on the Meshed-Tehran line, and by the Russians on the Khaf-Seistan section.

[10143]

No. 392.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

(No. 81.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 20, 1908.

COUNT METTERNICH took the occasion of being here to-day to say to me that a misunderstanding had arisen in Persia about the Customs administration.

It had been suggested by the Persians that the Belgians should be removed and replaced by Germans. The Russian Minister had reported this to the Russian Government. As a matter of fact, however, the German Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran had told the Persians at the time that Germany did not desire any change of the kind, and the Belgian Government had thanked the German Government for the action they had taken. There had, therefore, been no intention on the part of Germany to bring about any change of the kind in the Customs administration.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[9757]

No. 393.

Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office.—(Received March 21.)

*3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,
March 18, 1908.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to refer to your letter of the 10th October, 1907, relative to certain suggestions made by this Company in connection with the management of the Bakhtiari road.

We note with pleasure Captain Lorimer's remarks on the relations existing between the local agents of this Company and the Khans.

We are not aware of any personal ill-will on the part of the Chiefs against individual Directors of this Company, except in so far as Haji Ali Kuli Khan may have a grievance in the matter of certain loans desired by him in 1901 and 1906. In both these instances we have good reason to believe that the Chiefs as a body were not dissatisfied with our refusal.

With regard to the extract from a despatch from Captain Lorimer, transmitted to us in your Memorandum of the 4th December, 1907, in which Captain Lorimer suggests that it is inadvisable to expend a further penny on repairs to bridges on any account, I am instructed to point out that irreparable damage may ensue to the bridges if this course were followed. The bridges constitute our principal hold on the future of the road. We have incurred great expense and trouble in connection with this road, and we do not think it is reasonable to make us run a risk of the enterprise becoming a failure owing to neglect just when it is showing such highly successful results.

I am further instructed to say that the moment does not appear yet to have arrived when a satisfactory settlement can be come to with the Chiefs as to the future upkeep of the road. We hope that the time will come soon, but until it does come we trust His Majesty's Government will agree with us that the bridges must be kept in proper order.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. W. MACLEAN, Secretary.

[9763]

No. 394.

Persian Transport Company to Foreign Office.—(Received March 21.)

*3, Salter's Hall Court, Cannon Street, London,
March 19, 1908.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to refer to your letter of the 10th October, 1907, relative to the claim of this Company against the Bakhtiari Chiefs for sums due on account of construction of the Ahwaz-Ispahan road.

[1563]

4 S

My Board takes note, with regard to the accounts for expenses incurred for inspections and repairs of bridges, and for amounts due for instalments and interest on capital expenditure on construction, that His Majesty's Government is unable to sanction the calculation of interest on overdue amounts at a higher rate than 6 per cent. per annum.

We do not find in Article 2 of the Agreement for construction of the road any provision altering the usual rate of interest paid on overdue amounts. In the ordinary course, when a debt falls due, the debtor, if unable to meet it, borrows at such rate of interest as he can obtain from those willing to lend, and so satisfies the claim. The market rate of interest in Persia is 12 per cent. to 15 per cent., and the Chiefs are constantly in need of money. If we were to acquiesce in the rate of 6 per cent. stated in your letter, we should be offering to the Chiefs an inducement at the rate of 6 to 9 per cent. per annum to continue in default towards us.

With regard to the charge for repairing and painting the bridges in 1904, we note that no exception can reasonably be taken to the account, but that it is not desirable to require payment of interest on this particular bill, which does not appear to have been presented to the Khans. For this omission we, however, were not responsible. His Majesty's Consul-General at Ispahan failed to present this account to the Chiefs, as mentioned in the copy of a letter from Mr. Preece of the 30th December, 1904, to Sir Arthur Hardinge, inclosed in your letter to us of the 17th March, 1905.

With regard to the account for instalments and interest on 3,000*l.*, we note that His Majesty's Government cannot press this claim on the Khans on the general ground that the sum referred to was expended in contravention of this Company's undertaking. Whatever technical difficulties may exist in stating a ground for pressing this claim upon the Khans, we submit that there is no doubt as to their moral obligation to accept this expenditure, which was essential to the completion of the road, and has already been recouped to them with handsome profit out of its revenues.

We think we have a strong claim on the assistance of His Majesty's Government in this matter.

His Majesty's Legation at Tebran took part in negotiating the original Agreement between the Chiefs and the constructors of the road.

That Agreement provided no profits to the constructors on any sum they might expend. There was, therefore, no incentive to the constructors to spend more than necessary.

The original Agreement distinctly indicated a probability that more than 5,500*l.* might be spent on the road. In Mr. Lynch's letter of the 18th January, 1898, to Mr. Hopwood, it was made clear that when authorizing signature of the Agreement all we undertook to do for 5,500*l.* was to erect the bridges and expend any balance on the track.

Acting in the best interests of the Khans, we sunk a considerable sum in the improvement of the track before the question of expenditure in excess of 5,500*l.* arose.

The constructors were then confronted with a dilemma. They had to complete the road, confident of its ultimate success, or they had to suspend operations and proceed to recover from the Khans through His Majesty's Legation the cost of the incomplete venture.

The road was completed for 8,500*l.*—a very moderate sum—and has ever since conferred a handsome yearly revenue on the Chiefs. We estimate that their nett profit to-day, after deduction of all disbursements by them, and allowing for all instalment of principal and interest to date as claimed by us, amounts to 4,130*l.* (Annex (A) hereto.)

Had the venture failed, the Khans might have had some reason in endeavouring to repudiate the additional expenditure. But if they take the profits resulting from this expenditure they should also accept responsibility for it. The least they can do is to pay us one twenty-fifth part of the 3,000*l.* and interest thereon for each year past and future, so long as the aggregate profits are in excess of the expenditure.

With regard to the third account for instalments and interest on 5,500*l.*, we beg to point out that the Chiefs have never to our knowledge agreed in writing to the basis proposed by His Majesty's Legation. There are, then, three interpretations of the Agreement:—

(a.) The Khans have never committed themselves to more than compliance with part of the first clause of the Agreement, viz., to pay twenty-five instalments of 11,000 kran each, and interest at 6 per cent.

(b.) His Majesty's Legation has proposed a compromise on the basis of a total indebtedness of 300,000 kran, payable in twenty-five equal instalments of 11,000 kran each, and a final payment of 25,000 kran, with interest at 6 per cent. per annum.

(c.) We have uniformly maintained that such terms of the Agreement as are contradictory must be construed in the light of the reasonable intentions at the time of the contracting parties.

Referring to the Agreement—

Under Article 1 the constructors are "to make such advances for the execution of the works as hereinafter appear."

Under Article 2 the Chiefs agree to pay 6 per cent. interest on the "outlay" (undefined) and "to repay the capital sum"—

1. "In the course of twenty-five years."
2. "By annual instalments of 11,000 kran."

If the capital sum had proved to be less than 275,000 kran the Chiefs would obviously not have paid twenty-five instalments of 11,000 kran.

Under Article 3 the capital sum is clearly stated to be "a sum not exceeding 5,500*l.*" The debt, therefore, is in pounds sterling, and the yearly instalments of 11,000 kran, mentioned in Article 2, must be converted into pounds sterling. If the course of exchange had been such that it would have been more profitable for the Khans to pay on the sterling basis we could not have resisted such a claim by them.

There is a difference between (a) and (b) of some 1,250*l.* Between (b) and (c) the only difference, as regards the principal sum, is the risk of exchange. If the rate of Persian exchange were to remain uniformly at 54.55 per pound sterling the Company would suffer no loss. As it is the Company has already suffered a loss on the basis of (b) of 197*l.* on the instalments actually paid to date. At the present moment the exchange would be slightly in its favour as regards any sum paid now.

As regards past due interest, our remarks in the second paragraph of this letter apply equally to arrears of capital.

The copy of accounts sent us in your Memorandum of the 12th November last is made out on the basis of (c), with which we are in accord; that inclosed in your letter of the 6th instant is a correct account on the basis of (b).

We are pleased to learn from the despatch from Mr. Marling, inclosed in your letter of the 6th instant, that the firm tone adopted towards the Chiefs, as disclosed in the papers inclosed in your Memorandum to us of the 4th December, has produced a good effect, and that there is some prospect of the Chiefs making a further payment to account of their debt.

With regard to your inquiry whether we are prepared to waive the right of receiving payment at Ahwaz, I am instructed to say that this Company desires to hold to its right of payment at Ahwaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. W. MACLEAN, *Secretary.*

MEMORANDUM showing Nett Profit to the Khans from the Bakhtiari Road to date.

	Nett Profit.	
	£	£
Tolls received by Khans, 1900-1907 .. .. .	..	13,718
Amount expended—		
On caravanserais and constructing part of road (five caravanserais and Dopulan Bridge), estimated at	800	
Paid on account of instalments of capital and interest to March 1907	3,084	
Paid on account for bridge repairs	60	
Estimated amount spent on repairs (7 years at 100L.)	700	
Payment account robberies—		
Paid through us	300	
Estimate of other claims settled direct	300	
	600	
		5,244
Amount due by Khans—		8,474
Balance unpaid of instalments to March 1907	1,156	
Balance due for bridge repairs	340	
Instalments and interest on the extra 3,000L. as claimed by us	2,841	
		4,337
Difference, being net profit to Khans .. .. .	..	4,137

This statement takes no account of the large profits accruing to the Khans from rents of caravanserais leased out to contractors with the monopoly of supply of forage.

[9660]

No. 395.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 86.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 21, 1908.

WITH reference to your telegram No. 48 of the 17th instant:

Exchange of Persian telegraph lines.

Your suggestion that we should propose to the Russian Government that we should leave to the discretion of the Representatives of the two Powers at Tehran the choice of the best way to approach the Persian Government has my approval.

[9874]

No. 396.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 22.)

(No. 54.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, March 22, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraphs.

Your despatch No. 85 of the 18th instant.

I should, I presume, be right in informing M. Isvolsky that the steps to be taken by M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling at Tehran with a view to obtain the consent of the Persian Government to the exchange, need not be delayed by any discussions here as to details of transfer.

I trust that M. Isvolsky will raise no objection to the retention of British signallers at the terminal stations of the Tehran-Meshed line, and there should be no difficulty in regard to the removal of Russian signallers, &c., from the intermediate sections of the Khaf-Nasratabad line. We are, I understand, willing to agree that the Russian signallers should remain at these last two places mentioned. If, however, I see that Minister for Foreign Affairs is well disposed, I will endeavour to procure their removal from Nasratabad.

As the competent Department has still the question of the Khanikin section under its consideration, I think that I had better not raise it for the present.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[10028]

No. 397.

Minute by Mr. Kirk.—(Communicated by India Office, March 25.)

MR. MARLING'S telegram No. 78, dated March 16, 1908.

The Persian Director has informed the Consul-General at Meshed, with reference to the Meshed-Seistan line, that the Persian Administration only pays rent of offices and wages of Persian clerks, and that the Russians pay wages of the gholams and rent; also cost of repairs and all other expenses. It is difficult to say for what purpose rent is also paid by the Russians unless it is for housing their own signallers. But in the Government of India despatch No. 16, dated 16th January, 1908, it is stated that it is believed that the cost of repairs of this line is defrayed by the Persian Government by means of orders in favour of Russian telegraph officials on the local Governors of Seistan and Kain. I think the Director of Telegraphs at Tehran wrote me some three years ago something to the same effect, but I cannot trace the latter as it was not an official one. I do not think that the Persian Director's statement that the Russians pay all the expenses of the line that he says they do is correct. As the whole Persian telegraph system is farmed out to the highest bidder, it is to the interest of the Persian Telegraph Administration to be relieved of any charges that would otherwise fall on it.

Mr. Marling's telegram No. 79 of the 17th March and Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 51 of the 19th March.

Mr. Marling reports that the Russian telegraphist is still trying to obtain the special room at Birjand for the tape telegraph instrument. But telegram No. 51 shows that it has been settled at St. Petersburg that the instrument will not be installed. In this telegram it is also reported that the Russian Minister at Tehran had given instructions to repair the line only between Meshed and Khaf, but it is pointed out that this may lead to interruption of communication between Khaf and Seistan, and that the Russian Government are ready to agree to any measures to meet the above difficulty. It appears to be certainly just as necessary that the Russians should maintain and repair the Khaf-Seistan section of line, until the exchange of telegraph lines has taken place, as it is that the British should do the same for the Meshed-Seistan line. This seems to be the only working arrangement, and it might be pointed out to the Russian Government that this is what it is considered both sides should do.

March 20, 1908.

[10052]

No. 398.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 23.)

Sir,

India Office, March 21, 1908.

IN reply to your letter, dated the 12th ultimo, regarding the services of the Khan of Bander Rig in connection with the capture of the Dayir pirates, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose copy of telegraphic correspondence with the Government of India on the subject.

Mr. Morley agrees in the view that His Majesty's Government's appreciation of the Khan's services should be expressed to the Persian Government. He proposes, subject to Sir E. Grey's concurrence, to approve the suggestion of the Government of India that the Khan should be informed directly by the Resident of the intimation made to the Persian Government.

As regards the closing of Muscat to Afghans concerned in the arms traffic, I am to refer to the correspondence ending with my letter of the 4th instant.

I am, &c.

(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 398.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P. *India Office, February 18, 1908.*
PLEASE refer to letter to Commander-in-chief of the 22nd December from Commander of "Highflyer." Pirates in Persian Gulf.

It is proposed by Foreign Office that appreciation of services of Khan of Bander Rig should be expressed to Persian Government, and it is suggested that your Government should make him small present. I shall be glad to know whether you concur.

Appreciation of Captain Hickley's services has been communicated by Foreign Office to Admiralty. Unless you see any objection, you should make similar communication to Resident in Persian Gulf.

Inclosure 2 in No. 398.

*Government of India to Mr. Morley.**March 17, 1908.*

(Telegraphic.) P.
DAYIR pirates. Your telegram dated the 18th ultimo.
Handsome gold watch has been presented to Khan of Bandar Rig by Resident in Persian Gulf. Khan would, in Major Cox' opinion, be greatly benefited by conveyance to him expression of appreciation from His Majesty's Government, especially if Major Cox is permitted to intimate to him the fact.
We have acknowledged the services of the Resident.

[10061] No. 399.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 56.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *St. Petersburg, March 23, 1908.*

GERMANY and loan to Persian Government.
Reports received by Minister for Foreign Affairs from Tehran indicate some activity on part of German Minister there, and M. Isvolsky understands that the latter is ventilating question of establishment of the German Bank, and of a loan or advance to the Persian Government. Although, in M. Isvolsky's opinion, there is no fear of this activity taking a definite shape in the immediate future, he considers it advisable that some understanding should be arrived at by the Russian and British Governments as to what measures should be taken in order to forestall any proposal made by the German Legation.

His Excellency has discussed this question with me once or twice before, and he considers it significant that, while the German Minister said nothing to M. de Hartwig, he should have mentioned to British Chargé d'Affaires probability of a large loan with an International "Caisse de la Dette," and he considers that the motive of the language held by German Minister was a desire to sow discord between Russia and Great Britain, though I imagine the Russian Government could block any project to which they objected, as they have, I believe, preferential rights in regard to any future advances or loans.

I think Minister for Foreign Affairs would be glad to hear any suggestions you may make on the subject. He had no very definite one himself beyond that M. Bizot should be recommended to keep the British and Russian Legations informed, through the French Legation, of any offers which might be made to the Persian Government, and in the meantime to discourage that Government from making any attempt to raise a loan or an advance until he has had time to become acquainted with the financial situation of the country.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[9832]

No. 400.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 80.)
(Telegraphic.) *En clair.* *Tehran, March 23, 1908.*
ZIL-ES-SULTAN left for Shiraz the 20th March, having accepted Governorship.

[10028]

No. 401.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 66.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, March 23, 1908.*
PLEASE refer to Meshed Diary No. 36, and paragraph 4 (a) of letter from Government of India of the 16th January, respecting incidence of cost of repairs on Meshed-Seistan telegraph line.
Is information respecting division of expenses furnished by the Persian Director at Meshed, as reported in your telegram No. 78 of the 16th instant, undoubtedly correct, in your opinion?

[8873]

No. 402.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 43.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 23, 1908.*
THE substance of your telegram No. 306 of the 24th October, 1907, relative to the inspection of the bridges on the Ahwaz-Ispahan road, was communicated to the Persian Transport Company on the 28th October, and I transmit to you herewith copy of a letter received from them in reply, explaining the manner in which a misunderstanding arose on the subject.^o
I have to request you to bring the contents of this letter to the knowledge of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz, and to issue at the same time to that officer the necessary instructions to inform the Bakhtiari Khans of the repairs which it is proposed to carry out on the Godar Bridge, in accordance with the wish expressed by the Company.

I am, &c.
(Signed) E. GREY.

[8873]

No. 403.

Foreign Office to the Persian Transport Company.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 23, 1908.*
I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, on the subject of the misunderstanding which has arisen relative to the inspection of the bridges on the Ahwaz-Ispahan road.
I am to inform you, in reply, that a copy of your letter will be forwarded to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, with the request that he will bring its contents to the knowledge of His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Ahwaz, and that he will at the same time issue to that officer the necessary instructions to apprise the Bakhtiari Khans of the repairs which it is proposed to carry out on the Godar Bridge, in accordance with the wish expressed by your Board.

I am, &c.
(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

[10269]

No. 404.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 57.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, March 25, 1908.

SEISTAN telegraphs: Birjand incident.

I have received a further Memorandum from Ministry for Foreign Affairs, stating that telegraphic administration at Tiflis gave the order for the dispatch of the instrument in October 1907, when they had no knowledge of the arrangement between Great Britain and Russia as to exchange of lines.

The instrument has not yet arrived at Birjand, and Russian Minister at Tehran has received instructions not to instal it.

Would you wish me to convey your thanks to M. Isvolsky for the friendly and courteous explanations which he has given me, as incident may now, I think, be considered closed?

[10257]

No. 405.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 25.)

(No. 81.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 25, 1908.

GERMAN financial aspirations and possibilities of a loan (please refer to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 56). I do not think that Count Quadt is attempting anything of this latter nature at present.

Though, of course, the opening of the German bank next autumn would allow of more direct action, all that I gathered from his language to me was that Germany would try to get a voice in any scheme of financial control if the occasion were offered by Persia raising a large loan.

[10269]

No. 406.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 87.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 25, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines.

As you propose in your telegram No. 57, you may thank Russian Government for action in Birjand incident.

[10061]

No. 407.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 25, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg,^o reporting suggestions made to him by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs as to the steps which His Majesty's and the Russian Governments would do well to take in common in order to forestall proposals which the German Government are expected to make for an advance to the Persian Government and for the establishment of a German bank at Tehran.

As Mr. Secretary Morley is aware, Sir A. Nicolson is correct in his belief that Russia enjoys in Persia preferential rights as regards loans and advances since one of the conditions exacted by the Russian from the Persian Government in return for the loan made by the former to the latter in 1900 was that Persia should, during a period of ten years, contract no further loan from any foreign Power without the consent of Russia. His Majesty's Government have, however, since that date been able to make advances to the Persian Government through the Imperial Bank of Persia, and it is equally open to the German Government to take similar action either through the German bank at Tehran, if it should be established, or through some other intermediary.

[9206]

No. 407*.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Marling.

(No. 67.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, March 26, 1908.

WITH regard to the information reported in your telegram No. 77 respecting the treatment of a Bahrein subject in Persia, I am asking the India Office that Major Cox should be asked for his views of what action could successfully be taken to vindicate our position.

You should make a formal protest to the Persian Government against the action of the Governor of Lingah in arbitrarily punishing a British-protected subject, and in declining to recognize the good offices of the British Resident.

The possession by Russia of the preferential rights referred to is therefore of no value as a defence against any German scheme for an advance to the Persian Government.

In these circumstances it appears to Sir E. Grey that the suggestion of M. Isvolsky, that the newly-appointed French Financial Adviser to the Persian Government should be recommended to discourage any attempt on their part to obtain an advance until he has had time to study the financial situation, and that he should keep His Majesty's and the Russian Legations informed, through the French Legation, of any offer of the kind which may be made at Tehran, offers the best means of frustrating any attempt to provide the Persian Government with money from German sources. He is accordingly disposed to instruct Sir A. Nicolson to propose to M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's and the Russian Governments should approach the French Government, either jointly or simultaneously, with the request that they will cause the necessary directions to be conveyed to M. Bizot through the French Legation at Tehran.

I am to state that Sir E. Grey would be glad to receive early information as to whether Mr. Morley agrees as to the advisability of this course.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[10384]

No. 408.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 26.)

(No. 82.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 26, 1908.

EXCHANGE of telegraph lines and incidence of expenses on the Seistan line.

With reference to your telegram No. 66 of the 23rd instant. Please repeat last words; I cannot find the reference to the Meshed diary. I have just received here a detailed Report prepared for the Government of India by Major Kennion, His Majesty's Consul in Seistan, in which the required information will probably be found. I am forwarding a copy of it by the messenger leaving 27th instant. 2,102 rupees a-month is estimated as being cost of telegraph and line establishment. As regards cost of upkeep, it is stated that nothing is paid from customs revenues or by local Governors of Kain and Seistan. Persian clerks' wages and rent are not mentioned.

Generally this report confirms the information received from Meshed.

I have not received the Indian Government's letter of the 16th January.

[9874]

No. 409.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 26, 1908.

WITH reference to your letter of the 20th instant and previous correspondence relative to the proposed modification of telegraph arrangements in Persia consequent upon the Anglo-Russian Convention of the 31st August, 1907, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Morley, decypher of a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg on the subject of the conditions of the exchange of the Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad lines between His Majesty's and the Russian Governments.*

Sir E. Grey sees no objection to Sir A. Nicolson's proposal to inform the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the discussion at St. Petersburg of the details of the transfer need not delay the steps which His Majesty's and the Russian Representatives at Tehran may decide to take to obtain the consent of the Persian Government to that transaction.

Sir A. Nicolson appears to have interpreted correctly the wishes of His Majesty's Government as to the removal of the Russian signallers from the intermediate stations on the Khaf-Nasratabad section and the retention of the British signallers at the terminal stations in the Tehran-Meshed line.

With regard to the penultimate paragraph of this telegram, Sir A. Nicolson has now explained in a further message that, if M. Isvolsky shows no desire to retain a Russian signaller at Nasratabad, he proposes to endeavour to obtain the removal of

[1563]

* No. 396.

that official at the same time as that of the Russian signallers at the intermediate stations in the Khaf-Nasratabad section.

Sir E. Grey considers that such an arrangement would be in itself very desirable, but that the Russian Government are unlikely to consent to the removal of the Russian signaller at Nasratabad unless His Majesty's Government, on their part, are willing to relinquish the right to maintain a British signaller at Tehran or at Meshed, to whose presence, he understands, Mr. Morley attaches great importance to insure the correct transmission of messages in English.

Sir E. Grey concurs in Sir A. Nicolson's view that it is better not to raise the question of the transfer to Russia of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin line while, as reported in his Excellency's telegram No. 54 of the 22nd instant, it is still under the consideration of the competent Department of the Russian Government.

Sir E. Grey is disposed to reply to Sir A. Nicolson's telegram in the sense of the foregoing observations, but would be glad, before taking any action, to be favoured with an expression of Mr. Morley's views on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[10461]

No. 410.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 27.)

Sir, *India Office, March 25, 1908.*
IN continuation of my letter of the 4th instant, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose, to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a letter from the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf as to the use of the German flag by certain native boats in the Persian Gulf.

This letter appears to constitute the further report promised in paragraph 4 of Major Cox's letter inclosed in his despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, dated the 22nd December, 1907.* It had already reached the Government of India when their telegram of the 26th February last was dispatched.†

Apart from the subsidiary point whether any unauthorized British flags are being flown by native craft in these waters, all the information which is likely to be forthcoming has now been received. It remains to be decided whether there has been such an infringement of the Brussels Act as to justify action by His Majesty's Government, and, if so, what form such action should take.

Mr. Secretary Morley would be glad to be favoured with the views of Sir E. Grey on the subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 410.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Bushire, February 2, 1908.

WITH reference to my letter dated the 22nd December, I have the honour to report the purport of a further report received from the Residency Agent, Lingah, on the subject of the three native craft flying the German flag in these waters.

2. Our Agent had been able to induce the nakhoda, Amin-bin-Ali, who seems to have had some slight tiff with Mr. Brown, probably over their accounts, to give him his confidence.

It appears that Amin had his account with the German Company settled up to date before Mr. Brown's recent departure for Bussorah. The amount originally borrowed from the German firm for the purpose of two of the vessels was 8,000 rupees; of this amount 2,000 rupees, estimated according to the arrangement previously explained, have been written off, and the boats now stand as mortgaged to the firm for 6,000 rupees, *vide* the statement of which a copy is attached (Inclosure 2 (1)). The third vessel, the sambookh, is, as before explained, the sole property of Amin-bin-Ali,

* Sent with Foreign Office letter No. 5421 of February 28, 1908.

† Copy communicated to Foreign Office, February 28, 1908.

having been acquired before he came in touch with the Germans, but it flies the German flag.

3. All three vessels are said to have similar "papers," and Khan Saheb Ahga Badr has skilfully managed to obtain copies of them, taken confidentially by the Assistant Surgeon in charge of the quarantine duties at Lingah. These papers apply to the smaller of the two booms, the "Fath-el-Rahman," and to Amin-bin-Ali's sambookh the "Fath-el-Khair." The paper belonging to the other boom, the "Samhan," which is away on the Malabar Coast, is with its nakhoda. It is understood to be in the same terms. It will be seen that these documents have not emanated from the German Consulate at all, but are simply irresponsible certificates issued by Mr. Brown.

4. After perusal of them by Government, I beg that I may be informed as to whether any special action, either through the Persian authorities or direct in the direction of challenging the right of these vessels to fly the flag, is intended.

In my last communication I referred to the provisions of the Brussels Act in this connection, but if the quotation of that Act to the German Government should be contemplated, it would perhaps be advisable in the first instance that I should endeavour to ascertain for certain that no unauthorized British flags are being flown by native craft in these waters. I have no reason to think that there are.

In any case, I shall not take any further action in regard to the vessels sailed by Amin-bin-Ali pending a reply from Government to this reference.

A copy of this letter is being communicated to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Tehran.

Inclosure 2 in No. 410.

Certificates respecting Vessels Flying the German Flag in the Persian Gulf.

(1.)

THIS is to acknowledge that we have received from Amin-bin-Ali the sum of 2,000 rupees only as a part payment against the sum of 8,000 rupees, for which his two boats are mortgaged with us. The remaining sum of 6,000 rupees is not standing against those boats.

(Per pro. Robert Wönckhaus and Co.),
(Signed) THOMAS BROWN.

Lingah, December 15, 1907.

(2.)

Von Robert Wönckhaus and Co., Lingah, Bahrein, and Bushire.

Den , 19 .

Certificate.

This is to certify that the boom named "Fath-el-Rahman" belongs to our (German) firm, and therefore it is allowed to sail under German flag.

(For Robert Wönckhaus and Co.),
(Signed) ROSENFELD

Lingah, June 16, 1907.

(3.)

Robert Wönckhaus and Co., Bushire, Bussorah, Bahrein, Lingah, and Bunder Abbas.

This is to inform all whom it may concern that the boat called "Fath-el-Khair" is the property of our firm, and shows the German flag by our order.

(Per pro. Robert Wönckhaus and Co.),
(Signed) THOMAS BROWN,

Agentur der Hamburg-Amerika Linie.

Lingah, May 25, 1907.

* This word should clearly be "now," and has been misread by the copier.—P. Z. C.

[10530]

No. 411.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 27.)

(No. 59.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

St. Petersburg, March 27, 1908.

SEISTAN telegraph. Birjand incident.

On receipt of your telegram No. 87 of the 25th instant, I addressed note to Resident-General conveying thanks for explanations furnished by them. I added that I would communicate later views of His Majesty's Government in regard to the repairs it might be necessary to make on the Khaf section pending settlement of exchange.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

[10695]

No. 412.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 28.)

(No. 83.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 28, 1908.

IS there any objection to Messrs. Stevens, of Tabreez, entering into partnership with Prince Imam Kuli, who holds a Concession for putting steam launches on Lake Urmia? Russian participation has been proffered to the Prince, but he has refused it.

His Concession was granted before the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement.

I presume that there is no objection.

[10693]

No. 413.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 29.)

(No. 79.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, March 29, 1908.

FOLLOWING telegram, No. 24, dated yesterday, received from Mr. Wratishaw, Urumia:—

"I have heard nothing of the Turkish Commission.

"In reply to an inquiry from the Minister for Foreign Affairs as to the desirability of the neutral zone being taken as the basis of negotiations, the Persian Commissioner has sent home a despatch to the following effect:—

"As long as the Turks remain in occupation of the districts east of the disputed zone he will be at a great disadvantage, as the inhabitants will naturally not dare say that they have ever been anything but Turkish subjects; it is therefore necessary that the Turks should be compelled to evacuate these districts, and for the further reason that otherwise they will simply claim the whole neutral area and another deadlock would be the result.

"He begs me to support his proposal. What he says as regards the attitude of the inhabitants is true, but I told him that, though I agreed that evacuation was desirable, it seemed too late to insist on it as a preliminary to negotiations, seeing that they had already begun, and also that enormous pressure would be necessary to secure the consent of the Porte."

[10730]

No. 414.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 145.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 17, 1908.

I COMMUNICATED in accordance with the instructions conveyed in your telegram No. 76 of the 13th instant, to M. Isvolsky the substance of Mr. Marling's telegram No. 75, relative to a change being made in the Persian representation on the Turco-Persian frontier Commission, and also as to the desire of the Persian Government that negotiations should be transacted on the basis of the frontier line being

traced within the neutral zone. I beg leave to transmit copy of an *aide-mémoire* which I left with his Excellency on the above subjects.

I have also the honour to inclose a copy of a reply which I have received from his Excellency, in which he informs me that the Russian Government will not for the moment raise the question of a substitute being found for the present Persian Delegate, though they still maintain that he is not an efficient representative.

M. Isvolsky adds that M. Zinoview has been instructed to support at the Sublime Porte the proposal of the Persian Government that the frontier negotiations should be conducted on the basis of the line being traced within the neutral zone; and that M. de Hartwig has been requested to instruct the Russian Vice-Consul to do what he can to facilitate the discussions on the above-mentioned basis.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 414.

Aide-mémoire communicated by Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolsky, February 29 (March 13), 1908.

L'AMBASSADE Britannique a l'honneur d'accuser réception de l'aide-mémoire que le Ministère Impérial a bien voulu lui communiquer le 24 Février (8 Mars) au sujet de la composition de la délégation Persane sur la Commission pour régler le différend Turco-Persan.

L'Ambassade Britannique se permet de faire observer que, d'après ses renseignements, il n'y a qu'un Délégué Persan, c'est-à-dire, Mokteshem-es-Sultaneh, et que Mustechar-ed-Dowleh paraît ne pas faire partie de la Commission, mais est actuellement à Téhéran dans sa qualité de Député du Medjliss.

Du reste, le Ministre de Russie et Mr. Marling ont tout récemment eu une conversation avec le Mushir-ed-Dowleh, et tous les trois paraissent être d'avis qu'il serait mieux de ne pas remplacer le Délégué Persan, afin de ne pas causer des délais dans les travaux de la Commission, vu que Tahir Pacha a reçu des ordres de revenir à Urmia et de recommencer les négociations.

Dans ces circonstances le Ministère Impérial sera peut-être du même avis que le Gouvernement Britannique, de laisser les choses telles qu'elles sont et de ne pas soulever la question d'un changement de Délégué.

L'Ambassade Britannique profite de cette occasion pour informer le Ministère Impérial que le Gouvernement Persan vient de charger son Délégué d'insister pour que les négociations se basent sur la reconnaissance du fait que la ligne de frontière devrait être tracée dans la zone neutre. Le Gouvernement Persan espère que les deux Puissances feront à Constantinople des démarches pour que des instructions soient envoyées de Yildiz au Commissaire Ottoman dans le même sens. Le Gouvernement du Schah est très inquiet des préparatifs Turcs à plusieurs localités sur la frontière, et il croit que si les négociations ne se placent pas sur la base susindiquée les agressions Turques recommenceront dans le printemps.

Le Gouvernement Britannique serait heureux d'être saisi des vues du Gouvernement Impérial à ce sujet.

Inclosure 2 in No. 414.

Aide-mémoire communicated by M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson, March 3 (16), 1908.

TOUT en continuant à croire que le Premier Délégué Persan dans la Commission Frontière n'est guère capable de suffire à la tâche importante qui lui incombe, le Gouvernement Impérial pense cependant, d'accord avec le Gouvernement Britannique, que, du moment que la Sublime Porte, d'une part, semble faire preuve du désir d'amener les négociations au sujet du différend frontière à un résultat satisfaisant, et que le Gouvernement Persan, de l'autre, fait au Gouvernement de Turquie une proposition claire et nette tendant à faire tracer la ligne-frontière dans la zone neutre, il est préférable d'abandonner la marche des affaires à leur cours naturel et de ne pas soulever pour le moment la question d'un remplacement de Mokhtecham-ous-Saltaneh par une autre personne.

Du reste, le Gouvernement Impérial reconnaît que la proposition du Gouverne-

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ment Persan d'établir comme base des négociations la considération que la ligne frontière doit être tracée dans la zone neutre est de nature à faire renaître l'espoir d'une solution du différend acceptable pour les deux parties. En conséquence, l'Ambassadeur de Russie à Constantinople a été chargé de soutenir auprès de la Porte la proposition susmentionnée; des instructions ont été envoyées en même temps au Ministre de Russie à Téhéran l'invitant à prescrire au Baron Tcherkassow de contribuer, autant que cela sera en son pouvoir, à la marche favorable des pourparlers dans leur phase nouvelle.

Le Gouvernement Impérial serait fort reconnaissant au Gouvernement Britannique de munir Sir N. O'Connor et Mr. Marling d'instructions analogues à celles qui ont été expédiées à M. Zinoview et M. Tcherkassow.

[10731]

No. 415.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 146.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 17, 1908.

WITH regard to your despatch No. 55 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter which I have received from M. Isvolsky stating that the Russian Government have no objection to treating separately the question of the exchange of the telegraph lines Tehran-Meshed and Khaf-Nasratabad and that of the transfer of the British rights over the Tehran-Khanikin section. His Excellency adds that instructions will be sent to M. de Hartwig in the sense of the communication made to me on the 25th January (o. s.), when he is informed that similar instructions have been sent to Mr. Marling.

In his telegram No. 70 of the 7th instant Mr. Marling stated that he and the Russian Minister were of opinion that matters would be facilitated if the Indo-European Telegraph Department and the Russian Telegraph Superintendent were to approach the Persian Government on the question of the exchange of the two above-mentioned lines. I have not mentioned this proposal to M. Isvolsky, but I think that he would be ready to fall in with any suggestion on which both the British and Russian Representatives were in accord; and, if you approve, I might propose to his Excellency that the question as to the mode of procedure should be left to the discretion of M. de Hartwig and of Mr. Marling.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 415.

M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,
EN réponse à votre lettre du 23 Février (7 Mars), je m'empresse de vous faire savoir que, puisque le Gouvernement Britannique préfère traiter séparément la question des lignes Téhéran-Méched et Khaf-Nasratabad, d'une part, et celle de Téhéran-Khanékin, de l'autre, le Gouvernement Impérial ne trouve aucune objection à suivre cette procédure.

Par conséquent, je suis prêt à munir M. de Hartwig d'instructions dans le sens de ma lettre du 25 Janvier, en ce qui regarde les deux premières lignes, aussitôt que vous m'aurez fait savoir que le Gouvernement Britannique consent à expédier à Mr. Marling des ordres analogues.

Quant à la question de la cession au Gouvernement Impérial des droits sur la ligne Téhéran-Khanékin, consentie par le Gouvernement Britannique, cette question se trouve actuellement à l'étude de l'Administration compétente.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,
(Signé) ISVOLSKY.

[10732]

No. 416.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 149.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 19, 1908.

ON receipt of your telegram No. 64 of the 2nd instant, with reference to Mr. Marling's telegram No. 44 of the 13th ultimo, relative to certain steps which had been taken by the Russian authorities on the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph line, I communicated to M. Isvolsky a *pro-memorid* setting forth in detail the information which I had received on the subject.

I now have the honour to transmit copy of a reply which I have received from his Excellency, giving explanations as to what had passed, and expressing the readiness of the Russian Government to consent to any measures which His Majesty's Government might be disposed to propose in regard to the upkeep of the line pending the consent of the Persian Government being obtained to the exchange of the telegraph lines Meshed-Tehran and Khaf-Nasratabad.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

P.S. March 25.—I have to-day received a confidential *pro-memorid* from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, giving further explanations in regard to this incident.

A. N.

Inclosure 1 in No. 416.

Pro-memorid communicated to M. Isvolsky by Sir A. Nicolson.

IL appert des renseignements fournis par le Ministre de Russie à Téhéran que l'envoi d'un appareil télégraphique à Birdjand s'explique par le fait que l'Administration du district postal et télégraphique de Tiflis, dans le ressort duquel se trouve la ligne Méched-Seistan, prend considérablement à l'avance toutes les mesures préparatoires pour les réparations annuelles à faire sur cette ligne; l'appareil en question avait été envoyé sur les lieux, en conséquence, bien avant que le Ministre de Russie à Téhéran eût donné les instructions nécessaires pour faire procéder à la réparation de la ligne jusqu'à Khaf seulement. Quant à la question d'un bureau spécial pour l'employé de télégraphie Russe, la demande adressée aux autorités Persanes s'explique par le fait que l'édifice de la station avait été complètement détruit par les pluies, cette demande ne visait généralement qu'à obtenir un nouveau local, que le Gouvernement est tenu à mettre à la disposition des employés.

Il va de soi que l'appareil en question ne sera pas installé à Birdjand, et qu'aucune réparation ne sera faite par les employés Russes sur la section Khaf-Seistan.

Tout de même, il est à prendre en considération, d'une part, que si les réparations nécessaires ne sont pas faites à temps sur la section susindiquée, il pourrait en résulter une interruption complète des communications télégraphiques; d'autre part, il n'est évidemment pas possible de confier ces réparations à des employés du Département Télégraphique des Indes avant que le consentement du Gouvernement Persan à l'Arrangement Télégraphique du 18 (31) Août ne soit obtenu, car une pareille mesure provoquerait de justes soupçons de la part des Persans.

Dans ces conditions, le Gouvernement Impérial se déclare prêt à consentir à tout moyen que le Gouvernement Britannique proposerait afin d'écarter les difficultés exposées plus haut; il serait prêt également à céder à ce dernier l'appareil télégraphique en question, si le désir lui en était exprimé.

Saint-Petersbourg, le 5 (18) Mars, 1908.

Inclosure 2 in No. 416.

Pro-memorid communicated by M. Isvolsky to Sir A. Nicolson.

(Confidentiel.)

EN se référant à son *pro-memorid* du 5 Mars courant, le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères s'empresse d'informer l'Ambassade de la Grande-Bretagne de ce

que les ordres d'expédier à Birdjand l'appareil télégraphique dont il est question avaient été donnés encore en Octobre 1907 par l'Administration du district postal et télégraphique de Tiflis, qui n'était pas au courant, comme de raison, de l'Arrangement Télégraphique conclu entre la Grande-Bretagne et la Russie. Du reste, l'appareil en question n'est pas encore arrivé à Birdjand, et les ordres nécessaires ont été donnés par le Ministre de Russie à Téhéran afin de ne pas procéder à l'installation de cet appareil.

Le 11 (24) Mars, 1908.

[10734]

No. 417.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 153.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 23, 1908.

I INFORMED M. Isvolsky this afternoon that I wished to speak to him in regard to the exchange of the control which the British and Russian Governments exercised over the Tehran-Meshed and Meshed-Seistan telegraph lines respectively. It seemed, I said, desirable that the question of the mode in which the Persian Government should be approached should be left to the two Representatives at Tehran to arrange, and I understood that both M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling were now of opinion that perhaps the two Telegraph Administrations should broach the subject of the exchange, the two Legations remaining for the moment in the background.

His Excellency said that it did not appear to him at first sight that there was any objection to the two Representatives coming to an agreement between themselves as to the best method of presenting the question to the Persian Government.

I observed that while the Persian Government were being approached at Tehran, it appeared to my Government desirable that he and I should arrange certain details in respect to the transfer, and I had prepared a Memorandum, which I should leave with him, in regard to the arrangements which might be made. I have the honour to inclose a copy of that paper.

I thought it best not to mention in the Memorandum the information which has been obtained as to the mode in which the Russian control is exercised over the Meshed-Seistan line, and as to the disbursements which are made by the Russian Administration. Our information on those points is not very full, and it seemed to me that it would be preferable for the Russian Government themselves to give complete details on the subject. I also considered that the question of a Russian signaller remaining at Nasratabad need not be mentioned in the Memorandum, as it is possible that the Russian Government may not care to retain one at that terminus, and there appeared to be no necessity to take the initiative in alluding to the matter. Should M. Isvolsky raise the point, I would then state that no objection would be made by His Majesty's Government.

M. Isvolsky did not read my Memorandum, as he understood that it chiefly dealt with details; but I will inquire of him in a few days' time what are his views on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

Inclosure in No. 417.

Memorandum.

EN attendant le résultat des démarches qui seront faites par les deux Représentants à Téhéran pour obtenir le consentement du Gouvernement Persan à l'Arrangement signé le 18 (31) Août, 1907, concernant les lignes télégraphiques entre Téhéran-Meshed et Khaf-Nasratabad, le Gouvernement Britannique pense qu'il serait opportun de régler certaines mesures de détail y relatives. Pour ce qui concerne les démarches à faire auprès du Gouvernement Persan, le Gouvernement Britannique est d'avis qu'il serait mieux de laisser la mode de procédure aux deux Représentants sur les lieux. Pour ce qui concerne la ligne Téhéran-Méched, les arrangements actuels sont les suivants: A Téhéran et à Méched le fil télégraphique se termine dans les bureaux de l'Indo-European Telegraph Department, mais à des heures fixes les employés Russes y ont accès pour se servir de la ligne. Il y a un employé télégraphique Anglais à Téhéran et deux

à Méched. Le Département susmentionné dépense par an à titre de réparations une somme qui ne dépasse pas 20,000 roupies, et le Gouvernement Persan au même titre contribue une somme annuelle de 15,000 krans. Les gardes sur la ligne sont payés par le Gouvernement Persan, mais le Gouvernement Indien, pour aider au paiement des gages de vingt gholams, contribue une somme de 200 krans par mois. Un Aide-Surintendant de l'Indo-European Telegraph Department avec deux employés, un gholam, et deux farashes, fait l'inspection de la ligne, et les réparations sont exécutées sous sa surveillance. Tous les revenus provenant des messages télégraphiques, de n'importe quelle catégorie, sont versés au Ministère Persan des Télégraphes.

Pour ce qui concerne la ligne Méched-Seistan, le Ministère Impérial est sans doute à même de donner des renseignements précis et détaillés pour ce qui concerne le maintien de la ligne et les dépenses, &c., y relatives. Mais on peut dès à présent indiquer le fait qu'il y a des employés télégraphiques Persans, Russes, et Anglais, non seulement à Méched et à Nasratabad, mais à toutes les stations intermédiaires.

Le Gouvernement Britannique entend que le Gouvernement Russe est prêt à se mettre à la place de l'Administration Anglaise sur la ligne Téhéran-Méched, c'est-à-dire, d'accepter les mêmes droits et les mêmes obligations financières pour le maintien de la ligne. L'Administration Anglaise transférera le fil télégraphique aux bureaux Russes à Téhéran et à Méched, les employés télégraphiques Anglais y ayant accès à des heures fixes pour se servir de la ligne, comme cela se fait actuellement pour les employés Russes.

Pour ce qui concerne la ligne Méched-Nasratabad, le Gouvernement Anglais retirera ses employés sur la section au nord de Khaf, le Gouvernement Russe faisant de même pour ses employés sur la section au sud de Khaf. A cette dernière localité le commutateur Russe sera relié au commutateur Anglais en passant le fil télégraphique par le bureau Anglais au bureau Russe. L'Administration Anglaise acceptera les mêmes obligations financières et les mêmes droits qui incombent actuellement à l'Administration Russe. Le fil télégraphique à Nasratabad qui se termine actuellement dans le bureau Russe sera transféré au bureau Anglais.

[10735]

No. 418.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 154.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, March 23, 1908.

M. ISVOLSKY recurred this afternoon to a question which he had mentioned to me previously, and on which he had received a communication from M. de Hartwig. Some time ago I had informed him that the German Minister at Tehran, in conversation with Mr. Marling, had alluded to the probability of the Persian Government requiring a large loan, and had hinted at the establishment of an international "Caisse," or something of that nature. M. Isvolsky had on that occasion remarked that the German Minister had been as profuse to M. de Hartwig as he had been to Mr. Marling in his amicable and peaceful professions, but that in his conversation with the former he had made no allusion to any loan or financial transaction. He asked me whether my Government had expressed any opinion on the observation of the German Minister, and I replied that to the best of my knowledge they had not, but their views on the subject could be taken as being in opposition to any project of an international loan.

To-day M. Isvolsky said that he had received a communication from M. de Hartwig to the effect that the German Minister was displaying considerable activity, and that there was some possibility that he might endeavour to procure an advance to the Persian Government, and also to expedite the establishment of a German Bank. His Excellency did not think that there was any immediate prospect of such projects being realized, as all his information from Berlin gave him to understand that there was no desire on the part of the German Government to encourage such schemes, and, indeed, the situation in the Berlin money market was not favourable to financial adventures in a country like Persia. It was probable that the German Minister was acting on his own initiative. Nevertheless, it would be prudent not to disregard the possibility of some money advance being offered. A few million francs could be obtained without much difficulty, and he thought that it would be well if the British and Russian Governments were to come to some understanding as to the course which they should adopt to forestall any German proposals. Russia had secured certain engagements from Persia which debarred that country from seeking loans abroad without her

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sanction, and even as regards temporary advances to Persia had the right to "racheter" them if they were made. But he would wish to see some definite line of policy in respect to future loans decided upon, and he thought that the matter should be taken into consideration.

I said I would be happy to communicate his observations to you, and I should be glad to know what proposals he had to make. On this point I found his Excellency to be a little vague. He said that perhaps it would be well if a recommendation were to be conveyed to M. Bizot not to encourage the Persian Government to seek for any loans or advances until he had had time to study the financial situation, and that he should keep the two Legations informed, through the French Legation, of any projects which might come to his knowledge.

I think that M. Isvolsky may be meditating some joint loan to be offered to the Persian Government, but that his views on the subject have not yet been developed into a detailed project, and that the statement of the German Minister to Mr. Marling and the reports which have reached him from M. de Hartwig have a little perturbed him. He evidently feared that the German Minister was endeavouring to sow a difference between us, but I told him that he could make his mind quite easy on that score. The idea of a joint loan of some dimensions to the Persian Government has been for some time floating in the minds of the Russian Foreign Office, as on one or two occasions the matter has been mentioned to me, and it is possible that some proposal may be hereafter brought forward for the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

[10771]

No. 419.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 136.)

Sir,

Constantinople, March 24, 1908

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a despatch from the Military Attaché at this Embassy, reporting a conversation with the Russian Military Attaché regard the Turco-Persian frontier question.

I have &c.
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 419.

Colonel Surtees to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 2.)

Sir,

Constantinople, March 19, 1908.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that in the course of a conversation held yesterday between me and the Russian Military "Agent" here, Colonel Holmsen, of the Russian General Staff, the latter informed me that Russia had not moved a single soldier in respect of the difficulties on the Turco-Persian frontier, and that she had not the least intention of involving herself in a war with Turkey at present.

He added, however, that, should the Turks by their methods render interference necessary, it was presumed that England and Russia would be found acting together.

Colonel Holmsen is in close touch with his own General Staff at St. Petersburg, although his relations with the Russian Ambassador here are not of an intimate character officially.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. CONYERS SURTEES,
Colonel, General Staff, Military Attaché.

[10885]

No. 420.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 30.)

Sir,

India Office, March 28, 1908.

WITH reference to paragraph 4 of my letter of the 19th February last, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose, to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a telegram from the Government of India, suggesting that responsible control of the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph line should be vested in the Indo-European Telegraph Department instead of the Indian Telegraph Department.

A Minute by the Director-in-Chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department on the subject is inclosed.

Mr. Morley proposes, subject to Sir E. Grey's concurrence, to send in reply the telegram of which a draft is inclosed.*

The favour of an early reply is requested.

I am, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 420.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Telegraphic.) P.

March 20, 1908.

EXCHANGE of Persian telegraph lines.

See Foreign Office telegram of the 26th ultimo to His Majesty's Minister at Tehran. Effect of paragraph 7 of our despatch of the 19th May, 1907, was merely to suggest that it might be convenient to work line entirely by telegraphists from India; it did not involve acceptance of Russian obligations for Indian Telegraph Department. Indian telegraph authorities point out that, though they will do what they can, much difficulty will be involved by control from India, as gap between Robat and Nasratabad cuts off Khaf-Nasratabad section from telegraphic communication with India. It would seem better that responsible control of Khaf-Nasratabad section should be vested in Indo-European Telegraph Department, if former Department have spared staff available from Tehran-Meshed line, which is no longer to be maintained by them.

(Repeated to Tehran.)

Inclosure 2 in No. 420.

Note by the Director-General of the Indo-European Telegraph Department.

I THINK the proposal of the Government of India should be agreed to. It shows the arrangement that it was expected it would be advisable to carry out, namely, that it may be found desirable later to transfer the Khaf-Nasratabad line to the Indo-European Telegraph Department, both on grounds of policy and for the sake of unity of administration.

The reply might be that it is proposed the initial transfer of the line should be accepted by the Indian Telegraph Department through its signallers on the spot; but that when the Tehran-Meshed line has been transferred to Russian control, an officer of the Indo-European Telegraph Department would be sent to take over control of the Khaf-Nasratabad line for maintenance of line and offices, it being understood Indian Telegraph Department would help with signallers until men were available from Indo-European Telegraph Department.

March 24, 1908.

(Signed) H. A. KIRK.

P.S.—I wish to add that sending signallers to the Khaf-Nasratabad offices would entail some increase to the sanctioned staff.

H. A. K.

[10695]

No. 421.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

(No. 88.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, March 30, 1908.

MR. MARLING'S telegram No. 83: Prince Imam Kuli's Concession.
Inform Russian Government of the circumstances, and inquire whether they have any objection to Messrs. Stevens becoming partner.
(Repeated to Tehran.)

[11018]

No. 422.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 31.)

(No. 84. Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 31, 1908.

THE Anjumans have brought about the resignation of Ehtesham-es-Sultaneh, President of the Assembly, and Minister-designate to London.

Although he is so thoroughly discredited, for the time at least, that his expulsion from the country has been mooted, he might still play a part in Tehran. He believes that his former post in Berlin is always open to him, but it would be better that he should spend an interval in London rather than in Germany. As pay is uncertain, and he himself is not rich, he is not particularly desirous to go, and he is, moreover, perfectly aware that His Majesty's Government may well take offence at his behaviour.

That he would probably have joined the reactionaries, and hoped to make himself Grand Vizier, is shown by latest developments.

In these circumstances, would he still be received as Minister in London?

[11013]

No. 423.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 31.)

(No. 85.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 31, 1908.

PLEDGING of customs for subsidy to German school.

M. de Hartwig thinks that the joint protest, which he tells me he has received instructions to make with me, would, for the reasons set forth below, be inadvisable:—

1. If payment is made out of surplus of customs revenues, the two Legations cannot well forbid it.
2. Since the Assembly never authorized the order to pay, Ministers will not dare to honour it.

I have already verbally warned the Minister for Foreign Affairs in this connection that the first call on the southern customs is the service of our loan. But seeing that the Caspian Sea Fisheries royalty (*vide* Mr. Grant Duff's despatch No. 135, Secret, of 1906) is again available, and as, moreover, the southern customs are only pledged to us as an additional security, it would be even more difficult for me to make the proposed protest.

[11026]

No. 424.

Mr. Marling to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received March 31.)

(No. 86.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Tehran, March 31, 1908.

SINKING fund of British loan, and possibility of a small German loan.
Please consider the following as very confidential:—

Your telegram No. 35 of the 17th ultimo.

I was yesterday informed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that in a day or two I should receive the reply referred to in his acknowledgment of my note of the 24th ultimo on the subject of the sinking fund, in which he stated that a reply was

being prepared by the Minister of Finance. Mushir-ed-Dowleh could not tell me the tenour of that reply, but the Minister of Finance was, so he said, making arrangements to pay the sum overdue for sinking fund.

It is more than probable that the instalment due on the 4th April will not be paid punctually, though the promised reply and perhaps also the overdue instalment of the sinking fund may be received. It is, however, possible that, since the Caspian Sea Fisheries are again available, and would cover the total instalment due on the 4th April, the Persian Government may also be able to pay it. Their idea is that they could, on the security of the southern customs, raise a loan independently of us. The conditions which we attached to the suspension of the sinking fund are distasteful—particularly, in all probability, our prior right in case of a loan—and an effort is evidently to be made to avoid accepting them.

If the next instalment is not paid punctually, and if I receive their note, I might answer that no discussion of the conditions attached to our assent to the suspension of the sinking fund will be admitted by His Majesty's Government in these circumstances.

As a commercial transaction a loan is impossible in the present condition of Persia. But on political grounds, and with a view to secure a foothold in the Gulf, Germany might make a small advance secured on the Gulf customs as a "second mortgage." We might be brought into an awkward conflict with Germany if, in the event of this move on her part, we prohibited the Persian Government from pledging the Gulf customs as security; and Russia might not find it convenient to forbid the loan in view of the precedent of our own.

The simplest means to avoid this contingency would be the following, which, although I hesitate to suggest it, may avert graver difficulties later on. The Manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia should, without being informed of the real reason, be instructed from London to encash all payments made by the Persian Government against overdrafts of various Government accounts. The Persian Government would thus be prevented from making any immediate payment on account of the service of our loan.

I should add that it may for a time be difficult to combat the Persian Minister of Finance, who has adopted an unexpected, but probably ephemeral, attitude of independence towards M. Bizot.

[10384]

No. 425.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 31, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of a Minute, dated the 20th instant, by the Director-in-chief of the Indo-European Telegraph Department containing observations on No. 78 of the 16th and No. 79 of the 17th instant from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, and No. 51 of the 19th instant from His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, relative to the exchange of telegraph lines in Persia.

On receipt of this paper Sir E. Grey addressed a telegram to Mr. Marling inquiring whether he was sure of the accuracy of the information regarding the division of the expenses of the Meshed-Seistan line given by the Persian Director of Telegraphs at Meshed to His Majesty's Consul-General at that place, as reported in his telegram No. 78, and referring him to the Government of India's despatch No. 16 of the 16th January last, which gives a different statement of the incidence of the cost of repairs on that line.

I am to transmit to you herewith a decypher of a further telegram from Mr. Marling,* referring to a report, not yet received at this Office, which has been prepared by His Majesty's Consul in Seistan for the Government of India, and which is stated to confirm the information already received from Meshed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

[1563]

* No. 408.

[10885]

No. 426.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 31, 1908.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th instant, relative to the proposal that the control of the Khaf-Nasratabad telegraph line, when ceded by the Russian to His Majesty's Government, should be vested in the Indo-European Telegraph Department, and not in the Indian Telegraph Department.

I am to inform you, in reply, that Sir E. Grey shares the view expressed by the Government of India on this subject, and that he concurs in the terms of the telegram which Mr. Secretary Morley proposes to address to them with reference to their suggestion.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.

9252]

No. 427.

Foreign Office to Admiralty.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 31, 1908.

IN reply to your letter of the 16th instant, relative to the proposed visit next month of the Commander-in-chief, East Indies, to the Persian Gulf, I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to state, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that he sees no objection to this cruise including calls at Bussorah and the Persian ports.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LOUIS MALLET.